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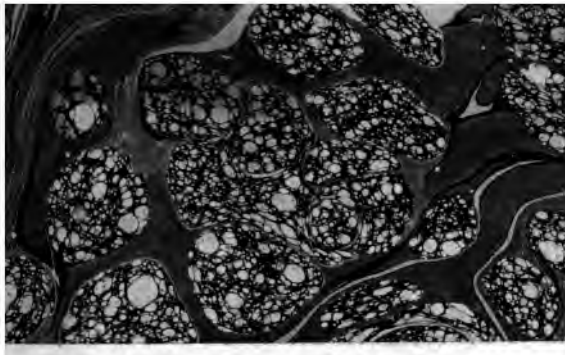

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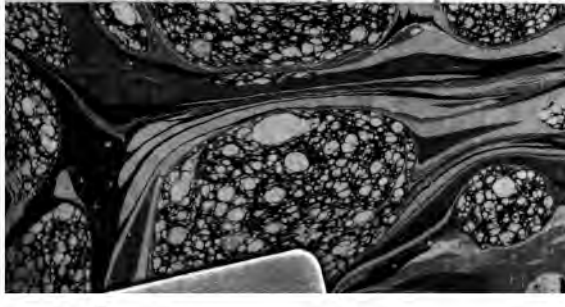

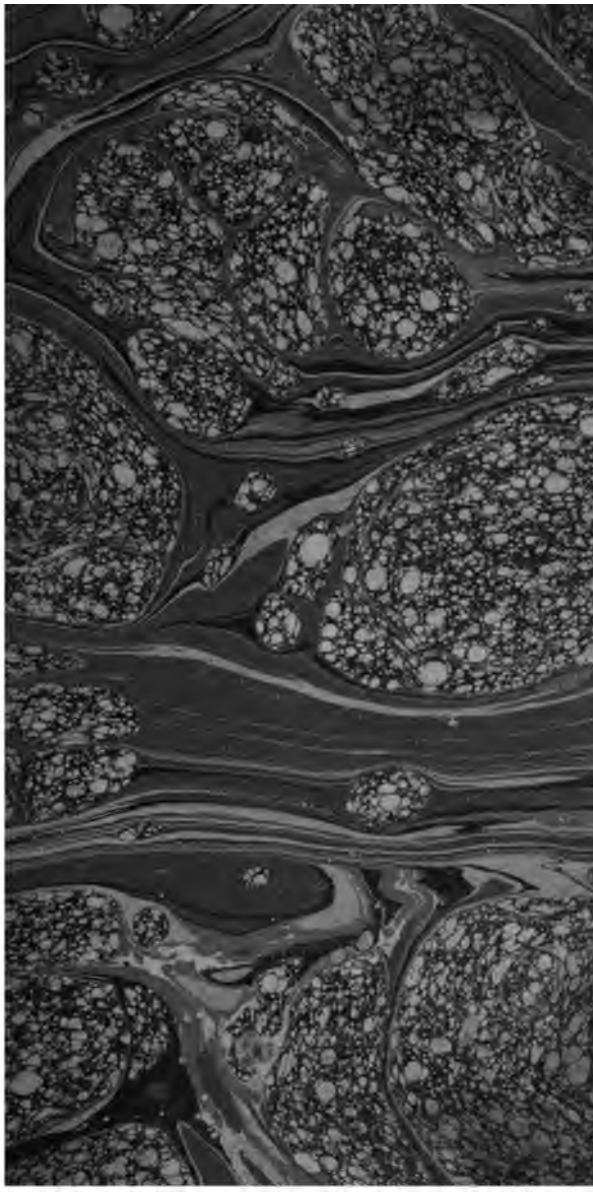

21

PICTURE of PALERMO

by

C. F. Hager

tranflated from the German

by

Mrs. Mary Robinson

Knowst thou the Land where Citrons scent the gale.
Where glows the Orange in the golden Vale.
Where softer Breezes fan the azure Skies.
Where Myrtles spring, and prouder Laurels rise.

Goethe.

LONDON.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of this Deſcription of Palermo, having reſided two years in that city, at the requeſt of HIS SICILIAN MAJESTY, *for the purpoſe of examining the Arabic Manuſcripts of the* ABBATÉ VELLA, *ſuppoſed to contain the Hiſtory of the Iſland under the dominion of the Saracens and Normans, availed himſelf of the opportunity to draw up a ſhort account of its Climate, Cuſtoms, Buildings, Antiquities, &c. He hoped it would not prove unacceptable to the intelligent part of Europe, as the Travellers who had previouſly deſcribed Sicily had none of them reſided more than a few days or weeks in the Capital.*

The

ADVERTISEMENT.

The preſent reſidence of the Court of Naples in Palermo will, it is believed, add conſiderably to the intereſt of a Work, which has been read with much avidity in the native Language of its Author.

SEPT. 22, 1800.

Wm M. Ly Bathany

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In the Preſs, and ſpeedily will be Publiſh

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

AN

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE KNOWLEDGE

OF THE

ELEMENTARY CHARACTER

OF THE

CHINESE LANGUAGE.

PICTURE OF PALERMO.

THE WINTER.

TOWARDS the end of October, the vintage being over, when in Germany winter appears rapidly approaching, as it terminates the autumnal ſeaſon with apples and medlars, the more temperate climate of Palermo exhibits all the beauties which embelliſh the Theſſalian Tempe, in the writings of the Poets. The moſt delicious fruits and the fineſt plants appear in luxuriant ſucceſſion. The plantations of orange begin at Florence, and preſent themſelves to the eye of the traveller as far as Naples: the olive-trees attract his view on each ſide wherever he paſſes; while the ſea, on the coaſt of which he journeys, the tepid breeze

which blows upon him, the bright ſummer's day, by which he is, as it were, again overtaken, and the diverſity of the landſcape, at once exhilarate and expand the heart.

At this period the ſmall ſpecies of orange, *baſtardoni*, which is ripe about a month before the common kind; then the ſweet *pomgranate*, the *kartaſi*, or the acid, the Italian fig, fill all the markets. Theſe laſt, which do not reſemble the European figs in the ſmalleſt degree, might be compared with dates, if they were not of a greeniſh hue, and covered with a rugged exterior. Their name, *kartaſi*, proves that they are a fruit of Carthage, reſembling the other pomgranates which the Romans called *punica mala*. Ripe olives, ſo delicious to an Italian palate, appear occaſionally at the tables of the natives, and are all gathered by the middle of November. The delicious fig of Auguſt, the laſt and moſt luxuriant of the three ſpecies, has

has by this time diſappeared; but the tree ſtill retains its foliage, as though it were June; while the evergreen laurel, the lofty cypreſs, the American aloe, and the citron tree, diſplay their never-fading beauties; and all this at a time when, in our frigid zone, the gloom of winter appears, the vegetation has loſt its ſplendour, and the mind is filled with ſombre ruminations.

The larger kind of orange, called the Portugalli, which had become ſcarce and taſteleſs ſince the middle of ſummer, may be ſeen in all the ſtreets of the city, when the firſt days of November are over. Their quantity, as well as their cheapneſs, is ſcarcely credible; but their profuſion rapidly augments, and they are in the greateſt perfection in the beginning of February, ten or twelve of them being then purchaſed for one penny.

Fahrenheit's thermometer, which never ſinks below 32 degrees, keeps chiefly the moderate temperature of 50 degrees, an height in which the oil of aniſe ſcarcely loſes its fluidity. Here it is not neceſſary to draw anemonies, jonquilles, and hyacinths, in glaſſes or heated rooms. Even the delicate jeſſamin blooms at all windows, and expands on all the garden walls.

The ſingle as well as the double *jeſſamin*, (which latter is called Arabia) is carried about the whole day, and ſold at the loweſt price. Next to this, the fragrant *caſſia*, the *clove* of Meſſina, and the autumnal flowers of every kind, diffuſe their perfumes. All theſe children of Flora ſtill decorate the villas of Palermo; ſtill the obſerver meets Sicilian girls in gardens, as though it were April; and what Virgil ſays of the ſouthern part of Italy, may be more properly applied to Palermo:

"Hic ver aſſiduum atq; alienis menſibus æſtas.

No

No miſt or white froſt, thoſe forerunners of winter—no humid or dewy windows are here ever ſeen. Even in rainy weather the foſtering ſun ſtill irradiates the horizon at intervals, with that brightneſs, which characteriſes our ſpring. Pennſylvania ſtoves, oriental *tennurs*, or Italian chimnies, are but ſeldom uſed here, even when the air is admitted through the doors and windows. Whilſt one party aſſembles round the ſocial hearth, others enjoy the delightful proſpects from the open balcony, and converſe as pleaſantly, as though they were near the fire. The flies, which in leſs cheriſhing climates uſually diſappear in the early part of November, are ſtill to be found in ſuch myriads, that to preſerve the hangings and the pictures from being ſoiled by them, a chandelier, of various-coloured paper, called *ninfa*, is ſuſpended in the middle of the apartment, upon which theſe inſects, from

an inſtinctive power not yet explained by Reaumur, or any other entomologiſt, throng together during the night in ſuch numbers, that the *ninfa* appears entirely blackened by them. By this means the furniture is preſerved from their injurious qualities.

In ſuch a climate, it is not ſurpriſing that the almond-tree begins to blow early in December; which on the ſouthern coaſt of Sicily, under the 37th degree of latitude, blooms at the end of October; and at Syracuſe begins to bud about that time of the year. But Palermo, which is nearly a degree more to the north, is in this inſtance ſomewhat later; and (as Shaw ſays of *Barbary*, which is at no great diſtance, and bears a ſtrong reſemblance in climate to Palermo) the almond-tree is not in full bloom until the middle of January: it blows before it has its foliage; and towards the end of February its delicious fruit is eatable.

Towards

Towards the middle of December, the green graſs ſpreads itſelf over the fields: white and yellow Mayflowers ſpring up on every ſide, delighting the eye of the paſſenger, and embelliſhing his pathway. Green *peas*, young *radiſhes*, as well as violets and orange-flowers, are at this ſeaſon expoſed for ſale in the markets: *brocoli* of an extraordinary ſize, artichokes, and a vaſt variety of vegetables, may be purchaſed cheaply, until January, the middle of winter, arrives, which alſo diſplays in the open air freſh *roſes*, *narciſſus*'s, and *hyacinths*. Still ice is eaten at the coffee-houſes in the evening; and the cold is not more felt with the doors and windows open than it is in Germany at the end of April.

On the 9th of January, 1796, I walked half an hour in the gardens of the Prince of Trabia, towards *Monreale*. A lofty grove of oranges, like the golden apples of the Heſ-

perides, encircled me and my companion, affording us a delightful proſpect! beautifully contraſting the ſnow, the winds, and naked trees, which memory preſented in our native country: we now remembered the ſledges, on which many an enchanting female was half frozen, to evince the warmth of her attachment to her attendant lover; while we contemplated the *ananas* flouriſh better in the open air, than its companion in the greenhouſe. We ſcarcely could believe that the ſun was in Capricorn; and thought, with Bailly and Rudbek, that we had found the *Atlantis* in an hyperborean ſeaſon, or had ſeen before us the Iſland of Tinian, which, according to the deſcription of Anſon, is replete with ſuch a variety of beauties.

After we had ſatisfied our palates, we filled our pockets with oranges; and ſuch was the profuſion, that no one called us to account for it. Now alſo, early in February, the

the *piſtacio's*, *manna*, and all other trees, begin to ſhoot; while the *tulip*, the *clove*, and the *ranunculus* make their appearance. Ripened *almonds* are at this period offered for ſale; and in the early part of March we ſeem to have a perfect May.

How ſtriking is the contraſt, which this climate preſents, when compared with Cook's deſcription of the Sandwich Iſlands, or Phipps's Voyage to the North Pole, where perpetual ſnow ſcarcely affords a ſpot of moſs for the *rein-deer* of Spitzbergen; where the ice-bear, the ſea calf, and the ſea-horſe, with their hideous forms, are heard roaring terrifically over ſhoals of dreary, crackling ice, ſometimes of an altitude of fifty feet; while the arctic circle extends a cimmerian darkneſs over the deſolated landſcape! nor is that contraſt leſs obvious, when the eye of fancy contemplates the coaſt of Labrador, on which the ſavage is compelled, by want

of

of food, to imbibe his own blood! where, according to the teſtimony of Curtis, the dreadful ſacrifice is practiſed of deſtroying the parent, that he may be preſerved from a lingering death by hunger!

THE SUMMER.

AS early as the month of May, when the citrons and oranges give way to the ſummer fruits, the ſun becomes more powerful through his perpendicular rays, and the continued drought, that it is often found with us even at the end of June. By this period the rain has ſubſided during three or four months, and the earth becomes parched, as in *Upper Egypt:* no gathering clouds, no refreſhing ſhower, or thunder-ſtorm, is to be expected till the autumn. Each ſucceeding day reſembles the former; and from the glimpſe of

of dawn till the cloſe of evening, every ſhade is peopled, the ſun-beams being intolerable. In order to exclude the parching rays from the apartments, no double curtains are uſed, as at *Madrid*, and other cities of *Spain*; but they ſhut out the ſouthern heat with green blinds or wooden ſhutters, as is the cuſtom all over Italy. This is a neceſſary precaution, to keep the flies from moleſting thoſe, who take the refreſhment of ſleep during the heat of noon. Like the birds who during an eclipſe of the ſun repoſe, and the plants which ſhut their buds as ſoon as they are deprived of light, the inſects of this climate alſo become tranquil (however troubleſome they may have been), as ſoon as the chamber is darkened: no humming ſound is then heard; and that ſleep becomes eaſy, which it would otherwiſe be impoſſible to enjoy.

It is infinitely deſirable to reſide upon the coaſt, where the breezes are pure and refreſhing,

freſhing, as they are perpetually paſſing over the ſea. Here are erected, near the ſhore, numerous bathing-houſes, for the purpoſe of bracing the nerves, as was the practice of our anceſtors in the time of Julius Cæſar and Herodian, before they had been enervated by luxury.

I here learned an art, (which will be uſeful to every one who does not wiſh to be incommoded with a Dutch ſcaphander, or Engliſh cork-waiſtcoat); an art which formed ſo eſſential a part of education with the Romans, that to ſwim and to read were conſidered as objects of equal importance. The natives of Sicily, who reſide on the coaſt, have brought this art to the greateſt perfection. They cannot indeed uſe any conſiderable degree of motion with their bodies erect, their hands above the ſurface of the water, and a veſſel over their heads, as if they were walking upon land, which *Kolbe* ſays

ſays is practiſed by the *Hottentots*; yet they are accuſtomed to amuſe themſelves along the coaſt in a variety of ways. Sometimes they imitate the *peſce ſpada*, or ſword-fiſh, and ſwim with one hand, whilſt the other, which they extend over the ſurface of the water, repreſents the ſnout of the fiſh. They alſo, in the manner of the *whale* or *dolphin*, dive and emerge, at every riſe flinging a quantity of water from their mouths into the air: they will lie ſupine upon the ſhore, as if they were drowned; this they call *Il morto in tavola* (the corpſe upon the bier): they likewiſe ſwim as the frog, darting forth their hands and feet at the ſame moment: now they raiſe one half their bodies above the water, like marine quadrupeds; which attitude was the moſt pleaſing, becauſe the leaſt conſtrained. Like Proteus, they aſſume a thouſand ſhapes; and they are ſo delighted with their ſportive exerciſes, that they

they remain many hours in the limpid element; and I have heard it ſaid that they conſider this practice as the only real enjoyment in life.

To temporize the heat which prevails during the morning, inſtead of chocolate, that faſhionable and delicious beverage of the Spaniards and Italians, the inhabitants eat ices in the coffee-houſes, where they have various kinds unknown to us; and if ſorbetti, or the common ice, is not deemed ſufficiently cold and refreſhing, they have *gelati forti*, or a ſolid lump, ſo completely frozen, that it can only be divided by a knife. Far from proving injurious, as ſome have erroneouſly imagined, nothing is more conveniently calculated to brace the ſtomach, thereby counteracting the power of heat, and reſtoring the vigour of appetite. For this purpoſe ſnow is tranſported from the loftieſt mountains in Sicily, from *Madonia*,

denia, the famous *Eryx*, and even from the ſummit of *Etna*, in the ſame manner as it is brought to Conſtantinople from Olympus, for the *ſherbet* of the Turks.

The labourer finds himſelf under the neceſſity of purchaſing his pennyworth of ſnow at the ſhops which are open for that article, if he wiſhes to enjoy the cool beverage, which, owing to the exceſſive heat, is rendered unfit for uſe. No *alcaraza de andujar*, that veſſel ſo well calculated to preſerve water by means of evaporation, which ſerves that purpoſe in the ſouthern parts of Europe and Aſia, is here uſed in ſummer. A number of ſmall aſſes convey the ſnow, well packed in ſtraw, every morning to the capital, where by the aid of ſalt any degree of frigidity can be given to it, that is required to conſolidate fluids of every kind; an art, of which the Roman Lucretia, in Voltaire's ingenious dialogue, was as ignorant, as of the uſe of

ſhirts

ſhirts and ſtockings, and which this c
tury has brought to ſuch perfection, that
can increaſe it to the 568th degree of Fahr
heit's ſcale; a degree of cold ſufficien
freeze mercury to the hardneſs of ſto
although it never was conſidered by
forefathers in any other light, than a
liquid.

Now is frequently felt the Sicilian *ſam*
that wind ſo fatal in Arabia, called by
Italians *ſcirocco:* it approaches like the
air which iſſues from an oven; the therm
meter then riſes immediately to an extra
dinary heat. When Count Borch wa
Sicily, it reached 38½ degrees of Reaum
ſcale; a warmth which not only exce
the degree neceſſary for hatching eggs,
even the ordinary temperature of the bo
which is reckoned 36 degrees. Howe
this ſcorching wind, which is only felt o
in the courſe of two years, generally co

n

nues about an hour. It would otherwiſe be attended with conſequences far more unpleaſant than thoſe which Gili relates of *Orinoco*, where the food is contaminated by maggots in the ſpace of one ſhort day: where, on account of the inſupportable heat, the women go about the ſtreets nearly naked; and where the Spaniards are under the neceſſity of binding their wriſts with ſilver plates, to abate the violent aching which they feel in the pulſe.

In the meantime, the heat at Palermo is ſo exceſſive, that after having kept it out of the rooms during the day, it is impoſſible to guard againſt it in the evening, when the ſun is ſet: the interior heat then ſtreams from the glowing walls ſo powerfully, to reſtore the equilibrium with the cool air, that the inhabitants are compelled to quit their houſes, and haſten to the open ſtreets, or the ſea-ſide; where, from the end of June

until the autumn, every evening the beſt ſociety is to be found; where delightful muſic is provided at the expence of the Senate; and cooling beverages, with various refreſhments, are expoſed for ſale, in addition to the luxury of enjoying the ſea-breezes.

Notwithſtanding all this, ſcorpions, ſerpents, and other venomous reptiles, are rarely heard of in this country. The Bailiffe of the *Duca di Monteleoni* ſhewed me, near the Temple of *Selinunte*, a ditch full of vipers, which are ſold for England. "After the poiſon is extracted from them, (ſaid he) no water muſt be given to them, or they will in that caſe recover it." This venom, which deſtroys ſo quickly when it enters the veins through the wound, is, according to the experiments of *Mead* and *Moſcati*, entirely harmleſs, if ſucked in by the mouth: the wound, however, ſhould be perfectly free

free from ſore, that the poiſon may not come in contact with the blood. In other reſpects, the method of ſucking out the venom, ſhould a man have the misfortune to be bitten, is much ſafer than the viper-ſtone, with which ſo many experiments have been made at *Milan*.

The *tarantula*, on the contrary, ſo common in the vicinity of Apulia, is not to be found in Sicily; there, however, its bite is always cured by means of the violin, guitar, bagpipes, and violoncello. All kinds of movements are tried, till the ſympathizing tone is diſcovered, when the patient ſprings up and dances to the time. This exerciſe continues from eight to ten hours a day, and muſt, frequently, be repeated ſix or ſeven days together, to the no ſmall fatigue of the reluctant dancer; who, when the ſtory is once told, cannot eaſily obtain a huſband.*

* See Vol. II. of the *Opuſcoli Scelti di Milano*, p. 306.

BUILDINGS.

AMONGST the buildings of Palermo, the palace of the Viceroy, which, on account of the preſent reſidence of the King of Naples, merits particular notice, claims precedence. A ſpacious ſquare, which deſerves to be compared with the largeſt in Europe, gives this ſuperb palace as magnificent an appearance as that of Verſailles, or of Caſerta. A ſingularly wide and commodious ſtaircaſe, with very low ſteps, after the Italian model, which far ſurpaſſes in elegance the famous ſtaircaſe of the palace Ruſpoli at Rome, leads to the royal reſidence of Ferdinand III. This was formerly the abode of Roger, that valiant Norman, who not content with driving the Saracens out of Sicily, purſued them ſo cloſely, on the oppoſite coaſt of Africa, that the Prince of Tunis

Tunis was compelled to pay an enormous tribute annually. From the windows of this palace the eye commands a ſublime proſpect over the whole city, the ſea, and the neighbouring iſlands. From them may be ſeen, in the moſt charming point of view, the Mount Pelegrino, the diſtant light-houſe, the iſland Uſtica, and the ſhips as they majeſtically ſail out of or put into the harbour. The late Viceroy ſhewed me here the hall of the Divan, which was adorned with oriental paintings, and moſaic work, and finiſhed by Arabian artiſts, who were ſtill, during the reign of Roger, in poſſeſſion of the mechanical, as well as of the fine arts. Roger made uſe of their ſervices in Sicily, in the ſame manner as Alphonſo and other Kings in Spain had done during the middle age. To have ſome idea of what the Arabians were at that period, the traveller need only look at the great moſque at Cordova, that monument of

Arabian ſplendour, which attracts the attention and excites the wonder of all nations. It is 600 feet long, and 250 broad. It is ſupported by more than 300 columns of alabaſter, jaſper, and marble. The entrance was through 24 brazen doors, ornamented with golden ſculpture, and 4700 lamps illuminated, during the night, this magnificent building.

The palace of the favourite Sultana of Abdurrhaman, two miles from Cordova, was not inferior in ſize. Beſide 40 columns of granite, which the Emperor of Conſtantinople had ſent this Prince of the Houſe of Ummia, one might count 1200 others of Spaniſh and Italian marble. The walls of this grand hall were covered with ornaments of gold: many animals compoſed of this metal threw water into a baſon of alabaſter, over which hung the coſtly pearl which the Greek Emperor, Leo, ſent to the Caliph.

In

In the pavilion, where Abdurrhaman was accuſtomed to ſpend the evening in the ſociety of his favourites, the cieling was inlaid with ſteel, gold, and precious ſtones, which reflected the light from an hundred cryſtal lamps—all this is affirmed by the moſt correct hiſtorians. At Palermo too, in the time of the Normans, when this Court was half oriental, gardens, fountains, and artificial ſeas, with gilded veſſels for the King and his females, were to be ſeen. Here were coſtly pieces of worked ſilk, which, with their red and green colours, dazzled the eyes, or being emboſſed with pearls, gold, and jewels, exhibited a curious picture, and ſerved for an imperial garment when decorated with Arabic inſcriptions. Here was made the Emperor's robe, which is kept at Nurenberg. Palermo, in the inſcription upon it, is called *Medina*, or the City, as in former times Rome and Conſtantinople were denominated,

minated, by way of diſtinction. The King's chapel at Palermo, which is in this palace, is ſtill adorned with Arabic inſcriptions, which cover the walls. The well-preſerved azure, the variegated colours, and the gold which embelliſhes the interior, form a beautiful monument of Arabian art. The librarian of the Senate Angelini, before I quitted Palermo, had prepared a deſcription of it for the preſs. At the entrance there is an inſcription, very intereſting to a Sicilian, cut in ſtone, in three languages; the Latin, Greek, and Arabic. From this it is clear, that in the time of Roger theſe languages were uſed, as in the days of Apuleius the Punic, Greek, and Latin tongues were ſpoken in Sicily. The Latin inſcription ſays, that in the year 1142, at the command of Roger, a time-piece was made, which confirms the opinion that time-pieces (about the hiſtory of which ſo little is known at preſent)

preſent) owe their invention to the Arabians. They were the people which, at that period, were not only acquainted with the arts and ſciences, but alſo made conſiderable progreſs in aſtronomy and mathematics. Before their time moveable time-pieces were not known. The firſt machine of this kind was that, which Charles the Great received as a preſent from an Arabian Prince, which, by its curious mechaniſm, not only marked the hours, but at every hour vibrated a muſical ſound, while figures on horſeback came out of the windows, and when they re-entered, again cloſed them.

After the time of Roger, the Sultan of Egypt ſent the Emperor Frederick II. another time-piece, which not only ſhewed, by means of artificial wheels and weights, the hours of day and night, but alſo repreſented the motion of the ſun, moon, and the other planets.

Next

Next to the palace of the Viceroy, the cathedral, on account of its Arabic architecture, claims our notice; for it was built in the 12th century, when the Arabians were in poſſeſſion of Sicily. It appears like the Arabian moſques and caravanſeries in India, which are ſo well known through Hodges's beautiful drawings. A number of cupolas adorn the exterior, like the grand Dſchami's at Conſtantinople; and the four towers remind the obſerver of the great moſques of the Levant. In this cathedral Frederick the IId. was buried, who died at *Fiorenzuola*, in Abruzzo. An aſtrologer, whom he had long before conſulted reſpecting his deſtiny, warned him againſt a place which had the name of a *flower*, and of *iron gates*. In conſequence of this he always refuſed to viſit *Fiorenza*; nay, he would not even once approach this city, till death overtook him at *Fiorenzuola*. When in the year 1781 his

porphyr

porphyry tomb was opened, the body, at the period of 500 years, ſeemed as freſh as if it were alive.

His perfect and entire corpſe, which was immediately deſcribed by Cardini, was wrapped in a triple imperial dreſs, the *Alba*, the *Dalmatica*, and the *Pluviale*. Upon the *Alba* were ſeen various ornaments; and upon the arms Arabic inſcriptions, embroidered in gold, but in characters of writing different from thoſe of the borders of the imperial mantle at Nurenberg. Below the left ſhoulder a croſs of red ſilk was embroidered, as emblematical of his cruſade to Paleſtine. The ſilk Dalmatica upon the arms was covered with a gold lace four fingers broad: the mantle had an oval gold claſp to faſten it, which was ornamented in the center with an *amethyſt*, with twenty ſmall ſmaragduſs on the circumference, and with four large pearls. On both ſides of the

the border, which was ſet with a double row of pearls, eagles were embroidered in ornamental circles, turning their beaks towards each other in pairs. The embroidery of this mantle and the other veſts prove the beauty of the work, and the ſingular art of the Arabians in performances of this delicate nature. Frederick himſelf had ſeveral lovely Arabian girls at his Court, who were well experienced in this art, and on account of which he was accuſed by ſome envious perſons before the Pope. He learned the Arabic, which at that time was the faſhionable language, as at this day is the French. From this circumſtance it is evident, why ſo many Arabic words have crept into the Italian vocabulary: it was owing to the intercourſe with that people, who then gave the faſhion: and, to evince a ſingle example, the Italian terms for embroidery, *ricamo*, and to embroider, *ricamare*, are Arabic.

Frederick

Frederick was dreſſed in green, after the Arabic faſhion, as at this day the Sultan is at Conſtantinople. Inſtead of the noble Hungarian life-guard, the Imperial life-guard at that time conſiſted of Arabians; and, juſt as in the preſent times, a Veſtris or a Gardel is engaged from Paris, ſo the Emperor ordered an Arabian to be provided for the opera at the Court of Palermo.

He introduced into Sicily the practice of heron-hunting, (about the origin of which the learned are divided) juſt as he had learnt it in his cruſades. The falcons were firſt covered with a ſmall hood, after the manner of the Arabians. He relates himſelf, in his work upon this ſubject, that he ſent to the Indies for able fowlers, for the purpoſe of obtaining from them the neceſſary inſtructions. The ladies at that time were ſo fond of falcons, that they were as much favoured and careſſed as the lap-dogs of the preſent day.

day. Haſſelquiſt relates, that the Arabians are ſtill accuſtomed to hunt that fleet animal, the *antelope*, with falcons. Tilts, tournaments, and all the eccentric exploits of chivalry in the Spaniſh romances, in which the ladies of the middle age bore ſo conſpicuous a part, were likewiſe introduced by the Arabians, who were ſettled in Spain 700 years, as we learn from the *Romancero-general* and other Spaniſh romances. The Jeſuit Andres, that zealous defender of the Arabians, has already remarked this; and Profeſſor Roſenmuller, of Leipzig, has proved the reſemblance of the Arabian poem—*Lebid* with the Spaniſh *Sirventes*.

A relic of theſe tournaments, the play with the cane, or, as it is otherwiſe called, the *Game of the Arabians*, ſtill continues, even after the expulſion of that people from Sicily, juſt as in Spain, where the play of the cane *(juego de cannas)* even yet, accord-

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ing to Twiſs, is a favourite paſtime, in which the champions on horſeback hurl canes at each other inſtead of ſpears. It has alſo been till now the favourite diverſion of the Mamelukes in Egypt, and is ſtill of the Turks at Conſtantinople. I ſaw the Captain Pacha with his ſea-officers, whilſt the fleet lay in the harbour, practiſe it himſelf on horſe-back; and was witneſs on many other occaſions to their ſkill in throwing the *dſchirid*.

This is but a faint image of the Arabian tournaments, as St. Florian has deſcribed them, from contemporary writers. The charming women, who were intereſted in the victory of their lovers; the ribbons, devices, and epigrams, which were ſent by them on theſe occaſions, or which the knights choſe themſelves; ſometimes the initials of their heroines' names; ſometimes a heart perforated with darts; ſometimes a lion, led in chains by a ſhepherdeſs; with a variety

variety of other ſymbols: then the variou colours, each of which had its particular ſig nification; as green was emblematic of hope red, of love; yellow, of pain; and othe colours repreſenting other paſſions. Th glittering armour of the knights, their dar and javelins, ſhields and ſabres of Damaſcus the wild horſe from Barbary, apparentl breathing fire, its covering ornamented wit pearls and precious ſtones; the knights veſt ments, enriched with gold; the towerin feathers on their ſplendid turbans; the ſcen decorated with many colours; a thouſan windows full of animated ſpectators; the pre ſence of the King, of the Royal Family, an all the Court; the exhilarating ſound of th trumpets, drums, and all the other orienta inſtruments; in ſhort, the combat itſelf, an the dexterity and youthful ſpirit diſplayed i it, muſt have altogether formed a delightfu ſcene; which we now only behold in th

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faint images we form from the compoſitions of modern romances: for though it was remarked by BURKE, that the age of chivalry was no more, the fervour of imagination is, unqueſtionably, at this epocha, in its full and moſt ſplendid zenith.

CUSTOMS.

SICILY, like all other countries, has its peculiar cuſtoms. As drums ſerve the Arabians, from whom we have adopted them, inſtead of bells, in Sicily likewiſe a ſimilar uſe of them prevails: the churchwardens go about the ſtreets in the habit of their office, with theſe inſtruments in their hands, to proclaim a feſtival; and at Naples it is not unuſual for a bagpiper, many of whom are ſeen in the ſtreets, to begin blowing his bagpipes, as ſoon as he comes into the

church, in the middle of mafs, and before the whole congregation. At Madrid, too, may be ſeen Canary birds in the churches, and ſometimes in cages upon the high altar, which as ſoon as the muſic commences, begin a loud cry, entirely diſcordant with the orcheſtra.

Although in other countries, nuns, becauſe they have renounced the world, are accuſtomed to reſide in habitations detached from the reſt of the neighbourhood; yet at Palermo, on the firſt floor, men, and on the ſecond floor nuns, are ſeen looking down from the windows.

As many cloiſters are ſituated apart from the center of the town, they make a paſſage ſometimes under ground, and ſometimes over the tops of the neighbouring houſes, in order to reach the chief ſtreet of the city. At *Caſſero*, which has been already mentioned, they hire the upper apartments, whilſt the

the lower ſtories are inhabited by ſeculars, for the ſake of enjoying the ſight of the proceſſions among the multitude, and of the illuminations. In other places they are uſually confined for life; but in Palermo, youthful nuns are ſeen in carriages, or, under the pretext of indiſpoſition, living in the houſes of their relations. There they ſtand on the balconies over the ſtreets, dreſſed in the habits of their order, contemplate the youthful of the other ſex, and frequently enter into lively and even gallant converſation, until they obtain their ſecularization, which has become very eaſy ſince the time of the Viceroy *Caraccioli*. I ſaw ſeveral married women at Palermo, who had been formerly nuns, and from the cloiſter had paſſed into the marriage bed. Of theſe nunneries there are in Palermo *alone* twenty-two. I viſited one of them, and ſaw there with commiſeration girls of eighteen and

twenty years of age buried from ſociety; for they find themſelves obliged to aſſume the veil, becauſe the female who poſſeſſes no portion cannot eaſily obtain a matrimonial eſtabliſhment.

Beſides the common *fiacres*, two-wheeled *caleſſini*, drawn by a ſingle horſe, ſtand in waiting in the ſquare called *Piano di Marina*. With theſe latter vehicles it is allowed here, as well as at Naples, to drive as faſt as you think proper through the thickeſt crowds. As the horſe may be managed by a ſingle perſon, they are of great utility; for, by means of them, one may go from one extremity of the city to the other with wonderful ſpeed, nay, almoſt fly: for this reaſon, in the extenſive city of Naples, they are in general uſe: there they are finiſhed in the beſt faſhion, and at the higheſt prices: for, in general, there is much leſs luxury and wealth at Palermo than in that city: and it bears the

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ſame proportion to Naples, both in reſpect to the ſmallneſs of its population and ſize, as Prague or Bruſſels to Vienna.

Beſides theſe two-wheeled carriages, ſedan chairs are uſed here as in other places: here, however, they are not only employed for the living, but for the dead. The obſerver meets almoſt every day a funeral, (conſiſting merely of a ſedan chair) of which there is ſcarcely any appearance externally. When I firſt arrived at Palermo, I looked into one of them, in the eager expectation of ſeeing a well-dreſſed girl, or a lovely woman; but my conſternation was infinite, when I beheld a ghaſtly and livid corpſe! I hurried back as ſpeedily as I was able, and never was again tempted to examine any other of thoſe vehicles during my ſtay at Palermo, much leſs to ſuffer myſelf to be borne in one of them. Certain whimſical cuſtoms alſo prevail in their churches. As chairs have

not yet been introduced, you muſt at your entrance hire a ſeat of ſtraw, unleſs you would ſtand during the whole ſervice. For this purpoſe poor *ragged* women are always to be found there, who provide you with them for money. On a grand ceremony, therefore, there is no end to the buſtle of their occupation: whether you go for devotion, or for the ſake of the muſic, you will be conſiderably interrupted by this very troubleſome cuſtom.

Beſides theſe *poiſſardes*, one may ſee the Sicilian *ſans-culottes*, who, without ſhoes or ſtockings, ſtripped to their ſhirts, and thoſe too with tucked up ſleeves, and linen drawers, appear tattered and dirty on a Sunday, or at a feſtival at church, and look juſt as if they had come from working in the fields. Inſtead of turning their faces towards the altar, they look towards the church door, and they are all intent upon the

the muſic. This is ſcarcely finiſhed, (and it is generally over in the middle of maſs) when they diſappear all at once with ſuch haſte, that in four minutes there is rarely a ſoul to be found in the church, excepting the prieſt at the altar, and the few who attend upon him.

When it is dark, many ſuch *lazari* cry out piteouſly for alms in the ſtreets, until midnight; *O Divina Providenza! poveretto morto di fame! O boni ſervi di Dio! facite la carità!* without any perſons feeling for their extreme diſtreſs. Their countenance is more hideous than any I ever ſaw in other countries: they may be compared with the *Fakirs* in India, whoſe ſhocking nakedneſs and mortifications *Sonnerat*, *Dow*, and others, have deſcribed, and which in the King's library at Berlin I ſaw well painted amongſt the Indian pictures.

Homicide is ſtill a common crime amongſt

the lower claſſes. A word ſpoken in anger, a little jealouſy, or the too copious uſe of wine, are the common cauſes of aſſaſſinations in cold blood; and thus at Palermo, as well as in the other parts of Italy, men are frequently permitted to live, who have already deſtroyed ſome of their fellow-creatures, and who glory in the crime they have committed. When I once paſſed a night in the *Pontine Marſhes*, the *Veturino* informed me that the *landlord*, the cook, the hoſtler, and the waiters, were all murderers; that in the whole inn there was no one who had not committed at leaſt one aſſaſſination. They are obliged to confine themſelves to this ſpot for a puniſhment; which, however, as it now appears, is one of the moſt pleaſant in all Italy. I therefore took care to be very civil to this tolerated deſtroyer, and to make no words about the charges he made:

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I contemplated, as often as he ſet a diſh before me, the features of this aſſaſſin's phyſiognomy, to ſee whether *Lavater* was to be truſted. For the ſake of obſerving them better, I queſtioned him on ſeveral ſubjects, and fixed my eyes earneſtly upon his countenance during the whole period of our converſation.

THE OBSERVATORY.

AT the end of the King's palace, juſt deſcribed, the newly-erected obſervatory raiſes its head, which, like its contemporary at Leipzig, is built upon an elevated turret of this ancient Arabic caſtle: but its horizon is not on all ſides expanded, as is the caſe in the view from the Leipzig obſervatory; but is only open facing the north-eaſt: towards the north, the Mount Pelegrino

grino raiſes itſelf five degrees above the horizon; on the ſouth-ſide, which is of the moſt conſequence to an aſtronomer, Mount Mezagno covers 6 degrees, 30 minutes; Mount Cuccio to the weſt, and Falſo-melle to the ſouth-eaſt, are ſtill higher; for they form with the horizon an angle of eight degrees.

The obſervatory itſelf, according to the obſervations which Father Piazzi, who ſuperintends it, has made, lies under the latitude of 38 degrees, 6 minutes, and 44 ſeconds; for which reaſon all thoſe maps are erroneous which repreſent the latitude of Palermo either higher or lower. Here Hook, after the conſecration of this temple of Urania, obſerved a comet, which appeared in the year 1793, without, however, deciding whether it was one of thoſe meteors which will probably occaſion the end of the world, by their approximation to our planet (as the ladies

ladies at Paris laſt year apprehended, and on that account ſought conſolation of Lalande); or, whether (as Profeſſor Murhard, of Gottingen, maintains in his new theory) it was a fluid body, which probably in time will become ſolid, and will bring forth plants, men, and animals, after it has become cool and dry like our globe. I, for my part, obſerved the degree of heat on the 6th of May, as I happened to be there in the forenoon, and found that Reaumur's thermometer was at 13 degrees, in the ſhade, and turned towards the north. From the above-named palace, which the Arabians called *Kaſſar*, or Caſtle, the principal ſtreet of Palermo, that leads ſtraight from this building, received the name which it ſtill bears, *Il Caſſero*, not *Strada Caſſara*, as Mr. Jacobi, a late traveller, calls it. The city, according to the Nubian geographer, was even in the time of Roger, that is, about 600 years ſince, divided

divided into two parts, the *Kaſſar* and the Suburbs. To alarm the inhabitants, this Prince, when he beſieged the city, made uſe of the Arabian courier-pigeons, which he found in their encampments, and which the fair ſex, in the time of Anacreon, employed in the taſk of conveying letters to their lovers. Theſe Arabian carrier pigeons were much in uſe but a few years ago at Aleppo. The doves arrived from Bagdad, which lies at the diſtance of 150 hours, in two days; and from Alexandretta, which is at the diſtance of 40, in three or four hours. Once a dove remained out three days: it muſt have loſt its way, for it had been during this while at Ceylon, in the Eaſt-Indies: This circumſtance was inferred, ſays Maillet, from the clove-root which was found ſtill green in its ſtomach *. The Caliphs by

* Deſc. de l'Egypte, B. 2, p. 271.

theſe

theſe means maintained a quick correſpondence between Bagdad and Cairo; and Otter found them ſtill in uſe between the former city and Baſſora.

People aſſign different reaſons for the return of the doves to their home. Malaterra ſays, it is effected by means of grain dipped in honey, which is given them by way of food: being accuſtomed to this delicate nouriſhment they journey back, without the aid of compaſſes, as ſoon as they are ſet at liberty. According to others, it is owing to the ſeparation of the mother from her young, or the male dove from his beloved mate. When this ſeparation laſts long, the memory grows feeble as with man under ſimilar circumſtances; the male then ceaſes to remember his love; and no dependance can be placed upon him. According to all accounts, fourteen days are ſufficient to make the mother forget her young: the male, moſt

moſt probably, will forget his love ſtill ſooner.

Roger, on the contrary, gave to the doves which he ſent to Palermo, letters dipped in blood inſtead of *billets-doux*, a device which occaſioned ſuch terror to the Muſſelmen women and children, that the air was filled with the ſame terrified complainings, as when the valiant Laudon menaced Belgrade, ten years ſince, with 300 pieces of artillery; or as when Suwarrow, nine years ago, ſtormed Iſmail. The city immediately ſurrendered, and became the capital of a kingdom, which before was no larger than a province. The old capital of Sicily, which had diſputed the firſt rank with Athens, declined gradually; and Palermo has ſince become the capital of Sicily, and the reſidence of the Viceroy, in the abſence of the Monarch.

OF THE WOMEN.

THE women of Palermo are of a middling ſtature, not ſo tall as the luſty inhabitants of Stiria, Carinthia, or the Tyrolian mountains; or as the far-famed beauties of Caucaſus, the Georgian and Circaſſian women, among whom exiſts ſuch an extenſive traffic for the harems of Agra, Iſpahan, and Conſtantinople: ſtill they are not of ſo diminutive an appearance as the race of our climate, or ſo enervated by the exceſs of luxury. No light-coloured hair, no blue eyes, thoſe diſtinguiſhing features of the Germans, according to Juvenal and Tacitus, are here to be ſeen; a few white-haired Albinos excepted, which may be found here as well as amongſt the negroes in Africa. Theſe people, like rabbits, are ſo weak-

weak-ſighted, that they cannot well bear the ſun-beams. Coal-black, or cheſnut-brown hair, black fiery eyes, like thoſe of the antelope, with regular features, are the predominant characteriſtics in the phyſiognomy of the girls at Palermo. A ſlender ſhape, a full boſom, a Grecian profile, give the gazer an idea, even at the preſent day, of that beauty which formerly ſerved a Praxiteles and a Polycletus as a model, or inſpired Acis with a paſſion for Galatea. The Princeſs *Lionforte*, (that Aſpaſia ſo celebrated for her perſon and her wit) the charming females, Calaſcibetta, Villa roſata, Caſtelforte, and many other of lower rank, might ſerve as examples. It was a Sicilian woman who ſo dazzled the eyes of the Governor Euphemius in the 9th century, that Sicily became ſubject to the Saracens for the ſpace of 300 years. Lais, that licentious ſlave, who had captivated even more

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men at Athens, was, according to Thucydides, carried away from Sicily; and Arnaud has drawn the portrait of Nina, in colours ſo attractive, as to make his reader in love with a Sicilian beauty.

They are educated in a cloiſter, where, to guard againſt ſeduction, they muſt remain until they are of a marriageable age. Even the lower claſſes are ſhocked at the idea of ſuffering their daughters to ſerve as chamber-maids in the bloom of youth, much leſs as common ſervants: theſe ſervices are performed partly by men, and partly by elderly women. Should the cuſtom, they ſay, which is related of Germany, prevail in Sicily, of ſuffering blooming girls to do the buſineſs of the kitchen and the houſe, like the cook-maids and chamber-maids at Vienna, no one would ever be able to provide herſelf with a huſband, amongſt the jealous race of Italians. On the contrary,

they are often married from the cloiſter, at the age of twelve, and become grandmothers at thirty.

Beſide the Italian language, they ſeldom acquire even a little French; but they do not even beſtow a thought on the Engliſh or German languages, and are very ignorant of foreign literature. No Marmontel, or Crebillon, or Mercier, or any other diſtinguiſhed genius, is here known even by name: no romances, novels, chivalrous adventures, or tales of ſpectres, with which Germany at the cloſe of the 18th century is overwhelmed, conſtitute the faſhionable reading of the fair ſex at Palermo: perhaps *Metaſtaſio*, perhaps *Alfieri*, *Parini*, or any of their own writers and poets, (amongſt which *Melli* at preſent is allowed the firſt rank) form the general taſte of the reading of a Sicilian female, and harmonize the ſenſibility of her mind: and perhaps were the

pages

pages of literature as univerſally explored by the women of Sicily as by thoſe of Britain, Palermo might produce ſuch illuſtrious females, as now embelliſh the metropolis of England.

The *piano-forte*, which has now become ſo ornamental a piece of furniture all over Europe, is here alſo very common. I have learnt on this delightful inſtrument many ſoothing airs of Cimaroſa, or Fioravante, and many a trio or duet of Andreozzi, by the ſide of a Sicilian enchantreſs. Love mingles imperceptibly with harmonious ſounds, and the dulcet uniſon of melting tones occaſions that of ſentiments; for nothing can be imagined more faſcinating than attractions of this ſpecies.

Beſides the piano-forte, upon which inſtrument there are as capital performers as there are good makers, the *guitar* is as common there as in Spain. This inſtrument

the Sicilian girls accompany, in thoſe graceful attitudes to which they naturally incline, with ſhort popular Sicilian ſongs, the ſoothing or ſprightly mazes of which yield not to the German in acuteneſs: yet the melody is not only different from ours, but from the Italian; it ſounds altogether like the Aſiatic ſtyle in the tone, which is called, technically, *mol*, juſt as I have heard it on the coaſt of the Thracian Boſphorus: it was, unqueſtionably, introduced into Sicily either by the Arabians, or the Arragonians, who kept poſſeſſion of that country ſtill longer.

Thus during the carnival a kind of *fandango*, or *volero*, with *caſtagnettes* and tambour drums, is exhibited, which occaſions ſuch attitudes, that modeſt females are frequently obliged to turn from their obſervation. In other reſpects, it agrees with that very dance which I ſaw firſt in the Levant, and afterwards in Spain.

The

The dreſs of the women is adapted to the climate which they inhabit. The head is always uncovered, as in a great part of Italy: no Spaniſh *reteſilla*, much leſs any thing like the clumſy Nurenberg hood, envelopes, or rather disfigures their beautiful countenances: a ſilken ribbon, a freſh roſe, of which there is no ſcarcity even in winter, particularly after Chriſtmas, or gauze embroidered with ſilver and a variety of colours, is blended with their unpowdered treſſes: no Swabian boddice deſtroys, by an unnatural preſſure, their well-formed figures: no high ſtays diſtort the charming contour of the women: a light corſet encompaſſes the prominent boſom; amber from Catania, or red coral from Trapani, adorn their poliſhed necks. A black veil, made after the oriental or Spaniſh faſhion, covers the head when they appear in the ſtreets. Still the charming females know how, when they meet

the engaging of the other ſex, ſometimes b
the motion of their heads, ſometimes b
their fans, to turn their countenances in ſuc
a poſition that the paſſenger can moſt adva
tageouſly behold them. The remainder
their dreſs is after the German or French f
ſhion. The fineſt muſlin, with embroider
point lace, gold chains, medallions, an
trinkets from London and Paris, embelli
the charms of the Palermo women.

Their deportment, their dancing, an
their attitudes, diſplay ſomething attra
tively elegant: they reſemble the mimi
graces of Lady Hamilton, which Rehber
of Naples, has ſo well repreſented. The
converſation is lively, and, as their counte
nance is accompanied ſometimes by a ſo
languiſhment, at others, by playful faſc
nating ſmiles, and frequently by vivi
flaſhes of fancy; the tone of their voice
enchanting, and their preſence perpetuall
enlivens ſociety.

ARABIAN ANTIQUITIES.

As Sicily was in the hands of the Saracens about 250 years, there are conſequently many other monuments and reliques ſtill remaining at Palermo, beſides thoſe which have already been deſcribed; of which the traveller, who has not ſtudied oriental literature, has hitherto made little or no mention. Beſide a number of Arabic inſcriptions, chiſſelled in ſtone, partly in the Karmatic, partly in the common character, and ſtill remaining, ſeveral of which the canon, Gregorio, has elucidated in his collection of Arabic inſcriptions: there are alſo many neatly-wrought earthen vaſes, and copper urns, with ſimilar decorations. Cufic gold and ſilver coins are every day engraved;

and Arabic diplomas are preſerved in the eccleſiaſtical archives, not only of Palermo, but of other cities of Sicily. Arabic inſcriptions appear upon them all, in the ſame manner as the Chineſe cover their walls and furniture with writing.

Beſide theſe works of the Saracens, there are at Palermo a kind of aqueducts, by which the fineſt water is conveyed from the neighbouring hills to the city, where every ſtory of the houſes is ſupplied. I queſtioned many perſons well verſed in the hiſtory of their country, whether the Romans, the Greeks, or any other nation, that have had the poſſeſſion of Sicily, had built the *Giarre*, and no one would anſwer me. But the Arabian term *giarra*, which means a reſervoir of water, and the circumſtance that they are yet remaining in the city, which the Saracens choſe for their capital, place it beyond all doubt, that we have to thank their invention

tion for this charitable inſtitution. The name *Katus*, which they give to the ſubterranean canal, corroborates this conjecture, concerning which there can be no written account, becauſe there is no Arabic hiſtory of that period now extant; and the Chriſtians themſelves, during the dominion of the Saracens, had no writers; for which reaſon the annals of this country, from the beginning of the 9th to the end of the 12th century, are very defective. The inquiſition, which till of late continued, ſeemed to have aſſumed ſome merit, in having deſtroyed books which they did not underſtand, while they really imagined their ignorance to be piety! By theſe means numberleſs accounts have been loſt, as Pirri and other Sicilian writers lament. Thus *Kuba*, an Arabian palace, ſtill remaining, is called, not after the Arabian Princeſs Kuba, as Mr. Jacobi ſuppoſes,

ſuppoſes, and as the Dominican Fazello had ſaid before him, but after a *vaulted palace*; many of which, according to Shaw, are alſo to be found in Africa, where the *Marabut*, or hermits, reſide.

Pelgrin, a mountain near Palermo, where the tomb of St. *Roſalia* is to be ſeen, does not ſignify a *neighbouring mountain*, as Mr. Swinburne would teach us to believe; nor is Palermo derived from two Arabic words, which ſignify *all water*, as the Count *Borch* was informed. *Monte Pelegrino* is Italian; *pan—ormus* are two Greek words, which a celebrated antiquarian has long ſince explained.

Azziza, which in Arabic means *dear*, or *very fine*, may with much more probability have become the ſurname of a charming Arabian lady's chamber. An Arabian palace near Palermo is thus called, which is thought one of the objects moſt worthy of notice about this

this capital. At the entrance, as it were, of this ſquare palace, built of hewn ſtone, is an arched vault, or *ſala terrena*, lined with marble, in the midſt of which a ſtream of freſh water diſcharges itſelf into a large marble baſin, and is conveyed through the middle of the hall by means of a canal well contrived for the purpoſe. The walls are adorned, after the oriental faſhion, with Moſaic work and Arabic inſcriptions. The whole hall may be compared to thoſe beautiful oriental ſummer-houſes, which are called in Perſian *Kioſchk*, ſome of which adorn the ſtrait which leads from the *Dardanelles* into the *Black Sea*. The roof is quite flat, like the houſes at Jeruſalem, Mecca, and other cities of the ſouth of Aſia, or like the ſuperb palaces of a *Durazzo*, a *Doria*, or *Brignole*, at *Genoa*, which are decorated on the top with vaſes, fountains, and artificial gardens.

Here

Here the obſerver enjoys a luxuriant proſpect over the ſea, the harbour, and the whole city; and, if he turns towards the land ſide, he contemplates verdant fields and flowery meadows, and the taſteful villas ſurrounding Palermo. Here the voluptuary can inhale, in the hot evening of ſummer, the exhilarating breeze; or, like the moſt beautiful of all the children of Iſrael, Abſalom, paſs the midnight hour in the ſociety of beauty. For in the eaſt it is not unuſual to receive viſits upon the top of the houſe, and to repoſe there—where, with us, cats only are accuſtomed to ſleep. There alſo may be obſerved, in the palace Azziza, Mohammed's Paradiſe, repreſented according to the deſcription in the Koran, in which he promiſes gardens to all true believers, through which fountains ſhall flow; and that nothing may be wanting to embelliſh the ſcene, there is an *harem* on the ſecond ſtory, ſet apart

apart for the Circaſſian beauties. This is ſo contrived, that every perſon can ſee from it, though they are themſelves inviſible at the ſame time to thoſe beneath them. Here I was reminded of the noble, but not ſufficiently known, *Kiagidchane* of the Ottoman capital, where by a gentle and even ſtream, ſhaded with trees on both ſides, under a pavilion of white marble, adorned with gilding, and reclined on coftly carpets, and cuſhions embroidered with gold, the Perſian ambaſſadors or Tartar envoys are regaled with the ſound of the oriental guitars, flutes, and cymbals, amidſt the moſt fragrant perfumes, roſe-water, and confectionaries.

A VIEW OF THE SEA.

WHAT is more calculated to give us a ſublime conception of Omnipotent power than the view of the ſea?

Now

Now one beholds a tremendous ſtorm exa the waves: the billows daſhing againſt eac other cauſe a terrific roar, like a boilin furnace; ſo that a man cannot hear his ow voice, either on board the ſhip or on th ſhore. The colour of the water, which firſt appears green, like oil, changes blue, then becomes dark, and afterwards j black: the white foam dances upon th ſombre and rolling waves: rocks of ſtupe dous altitude elevate their heads above th ſurface of the water, which threaten at eve moment to engulph the traveller: the bi lows, agitated by the wind, roll higher an higher round the ſides of the rocking veſſe the hurricane from the north-eaſt, ſouth weſt, or any other point of the compa blows ſtrongly, and with a clamour whic far exceeds any land ſtorm even during th equinoxes: waves, that ſeem to menac death, extend to the diſtant margin of th horizo

horizon, where a frightful ſolitude leaves the pilot, during a ſtorm, to his perilous deſtiny; no help is to be found over the ocean, far and wide; the only hope then reſts upon the few wooden planks which are attached together by pitch. The wind increaſes; the waves begin to rage more furiouſly; the high maſts bow, with their ſails drawn in, to the ſurface of the waters, now on the right, now on the left: no one can ſtand ſteady on account of the inceſſant and violent motion of the ſhip: all the planks crack ſo terribly that they ſeem ready to burſt aſunder, while the foaming billows beat on the outſide of the hollow rebellowing body of the veſſel: and no one knows whether it has not already ſprung a leak, and by the entrance of the water, made deſtruction certain. In effect, it ruſhes into every crevice of the lower part of the ſhip. The crew, which before in ſportive merriment had amuſed

amuſed themſelves with ſinging, vaulting, cards, or any other ſpecies of diverſion, now crouded in a maſs, and become deſponding, no ſyllable is uttered from their lips. Now, too, night arrives; the black clouds envelope the horizon, and ſhut out every gleam of light; thick darkneſs augments the diverſity of horrors; moon and ſtars are entirely obſcured; the neighbouring rocks; the unknown ſand-banks; the lightning in the firmament; the powder magazine in the ſhip; the African pirates; the French corſairs; all ruſh in a terrifying accumulation upon the mind of the beholder.

At another time, the traveller witneſſes a different proſpect; the outſtretched ocean then exhibits the brighteſt calm: the ſun enlivens the luxuriant coaſt, enriched with flowers and freſh verdure; a cooling breeze, like the gentle moaning of the turtle-dove, ſteals ſoftly over the clear curling water. Many veſſels,

veſſels, of all forms and deſcriptions, croſs the calm ſea with their white ſails, purple flags, and painted rudders. The freſhly-decorated foreign ſhips, with their ſtriped and coloured flags, their maſts and ſails, ride at anchor. The near light-houſe; the high batteries; the ſplendid villas and magazines on each ſide of the harbour; the far-extended ſuburbs, iſlands, and villages; the numerous throngs from different countries: Dutch captains, American merchants, Engliſh travellers, and ſtrangers from the eaſt, in their various habits and manners, bring intelligence from Liſbon, Alexandria, Philadelphia, and ſpeak of Bengal, Jamaica, of Madras or Eſequibo, as of places not far diſtant. The roaring of the cannon, which announces ſometimes the arrival of a packet, ſometimes the ſailing of a war ſhip; the ſtriking view of this *winged* caſtle, as it glides there majeſtically, and carries with it ſo many

 ſailors,

ſailors, ſoldiers, and cannon: all theſe, with other circumſtances, render the ſea a moſt intereſting object; while they make the mariners forget their paſt fatigues, and invite them chearfully to commence new voyages.

THEATRES.

BOTH the theatres at Palermo are ſupplied from year to year with ſingers, dancers and actors, by the travelling companies from Italy. No harlequin offends the ears of the delicate ſpectator by his coarſe buffoonery; no ſtage trick degrades the dignity of the Italian *ſpectacle*; regular repreſentations are exhibited, inſtead of low pantomimical deceptions, or refined ſatires; and well delineated characters have, by degrees, ſuperſeded the low humour of former periods. However, there are ſometimes exhibited ſuch

ſuch ſcenes, as are not to be witneſſed in any other city. For inſtance: *Abbé*'s are ſeen not only to tread the ſtage in the habit of their order, but to undertake the arrangement of amorous negociations. At Naples laſt year, in the *Modiſta Raggiratrice*, (the *Intriguing Milliner*) two girls were ſeen to put upon an eccleſiaſtic, a woman's hood, to tear from his neck the collar of his order, that chief enſign of holy dignity, to throw it upon the ground, and with contempt to tread upon it; they then made him gallant propoſals, and tenders of favour not very characteriſtic of Catholic celibacy. I ſaw that ſcene exhibited at leaſt twenty times, for the piece was repeated daily; and I told it at the table of a celebrated Cardinal, to whoſe houſe I happened ſhortly afterwards to be invited, merely for the purpoſe of hearing his obſervations upon it. I did not think, at that time, that about a year after-

wards the ſame thing would happen at Palermo.

The two theatres are not to be compared with any of the largeſt theatres of Europe, either in reſpect to outward ornaments, or internal decorations. No commodious, much leſs grand entrance, as at the *Fenice* of *Venice*; no capacious and well lighted boxes, as in the *Alla Scala* at *Milan*; no ſuch *façade*, adorns the grand opera-houſe at *Berlin*, or the theatre at *Bordeaux*, (which is ſupported by Corinthian pillars) are here to be found. Still, however, the ſpectator is not obliged to ſtand in the pit during the whole performance, which Voltaire objected to in the French theatres, and which is ſtill cuſtomary in many parts of Germany. The price of admiſſion is very moderate. The dreſſes, orcheſtra, and decorations, are not indeed to be compared with thoſe of the theatres of Vienna, London, or Paris; ſtill all theſe things

are

are much better regulated at Palermo, than in many other richer and more populous cities of Europe. There is beſide no throng of carriages going and returning; and, in general, no very numerous audience is to be expected, in a city which ſcarcely appeared to me to contain more than 70,000 inhabitants. On the contrary, there is no need to be alarmed about pickpockets, who may rob the paſſenger of his watch, purſe, or pocket-book, either on entering or coming out of the theatres.

The performers know very well how to repreſent the characters aſſigned to them; the *ſaturnine Engliſhman*, the *ſprightly Frenchman*, and the *German, en caricature*. There, indeed, the ſpectator does not find a *Contat*, a *Siddons*, a *Mollet*, or a *Jordan*: the *Tomeoni*'s and *Billington*'s do not travel as far as Sicily for an engagement. Yet there are ſeveral actreſſes of this place, as well as

young actors, who are competent to diſplay a conſiderable degree of theatrical genius. They are ſtill, however, without a reliſh for foreign compoſitions, and know but little of *Corneille*, *Racine*, or *Voltaire*, ſtill leſs of the chief German pieces; ſuch as thoſe of *Schiller*, *Kotzebue*, and *Iffland*.

The Italians do not pay much attention to the acquirement of languages, as the Germans do; they ſeldom underſtand even a little French or Spaniſh, and conſider all other tongues as too diſcordant. Being excluſively devoted to the beauties of their own language, they are accuſtomed to have exhibitions in the theatres of their talents in ſpeaking it; juſt like the muſical entertainments of other nations.

Here the *improviſatori* (or people who poſſeſs ſo remarkable a command of language, that they can return *extempore* an anſwer in rhyme to any ſubject propoſed t

them

them) are met with. I ſaw at Palermo four ſubjects given, one after the other, of which the firſt was, *Ariadne at Naxos*; the ſecond, *Curtius* precipitating himſelf into the gulf; the third, *Coriolanus* before his native town; and, laſtly, the Invention of the Mirror. The *improviſatore* anſwered theſe points extempore, not only with great facility, but with a ſplendour of ideas and images conveyed in the moſt flowing rhymes: and I do not believe that any other language yet known (except the Arabic, in which, as Savary relates, the Egyptian women have an equal readineſs, and which far excels the Italian in richneſs) would be adapted to this purpoſe.

Beſide theſe colloquial exerciſes, there are alſo exhibitions of fencing between twenty perſons, or more, either introduced ſingly on the theatre, or repreſented in the *ballets* as battles: in which laſt, the man

who leaps and turns himſelf in a *groteſque manner*, is applauded more than the ſolo dancer. He who can whirl himſelf moſt ſkilfully round, three or four times upon one foot, is more admired than the beſt *prima Donna*; and even the moſt indifferent ballet is continually preferred to the very beſt ſongs.

A ſmall theatre is erected in the ſummer near the ſea. In this *ſpectacle* men are dreſſed as women; but no *caſtrati*, as till now has been the caſe in Rome, perform female characters. The moſt indifferent actor plays a *vaſlaſo*, or a porter, dreſſed according to the faſhion of Sicily. Here certainly we muſt not look for the refined taſte which characterizes the larger theatres. The prominent jeſts conſiſt in blows and cheats. The language is Sicilian, and ſcarcely intelligible to thoſe who are not well verſed in it: *ſciariare*, to contend; *chiarare*,

nare, to jump; *taliate*, look; *cuſturero*, a taylor; and many other expreſſions, which muſt be learnt even by a native Italian. Punch too, *(pulicinello)* exhibits his public performances, before the people who are paſſing by, in his uſual tone, which any one can imitate by laying a ſmall piece of tin upon the tongue.

In ſhort, there are not wanting, from time to time, *Charlatans* or *Mountebanks*, who amuſe by their tales the idle and credulous multitude, and early in the morning keep them from their occupations, as has ſince been the caſe at Naples, Milan, and Venice. But the alternative, either to truſt to the mercy of the ocean, or to undertake a troubleſome and expenſive journey through all Calabria, and the north ſide of Sicily, prevents many people from viſiting Palermo. It has therefore a miſerable appearance, both as to jugglers and good players. Meſſina,

ſina, on the contrary, which has ſo long contended for the firſt rank, which were it not for the reſidence of the Viceroy, would leave Palermo far behind, has the ſuperiority not only in this, but in other reſpects. There the traveller enjoys the conſoling ſight of the not far diſtant continent, which lies as near as the Aſiatic ſhore is to Conſtantinople. He can ſail over to *Reggio*, in Calabria, in the ſame manner as to *Scutari*, by breakfaſt-time, and return home to dinner. Whilſt the proſpect at Palermo exhibits nothing more than the wide-extended ocean, with the painful recollection, that he muſt travel perhaps eight days before he can reach the continent. Strangers and news are daily arriving at Meſſina from Reggio, Scilla, and the oppoſite coaſt of Calabria. At Palermo one muſt frequently wait a whole week before the wind will permit the arrival of a ſingle veſſel from the continent. All ſhips which

which ſail from the Mediterranean to the Adriatic, or return thither, muſt paſs the Streights of Meſſina: no day, no hour of the day paſſes, in which veſſels are not in view, either on the right or on the left: moſt of them put in there; and the port affords a perpetual ſupply of news. The harbour of Palermo, on the contrary, is generally empty; for, except when a ſtorm drives in ſome veſſels from *Tunis*, *Malta*, or *Sardinia*; or, when the packet-boat, every three weeks, brings over letters and paſſengers from Naples, it is for the moſt part but little frequented. Meſſina has been rebuilt, quite regularly, ſince the earthquake; provided with moſt commodious hotels; arranged according to the French and Engliſh faſhion, and with a convenient theatre; it is, therefore, now become one of the moſt beautiful cities in Europe. Palermo has ſtill an antique appearance; the houſes are built in an aukward

ward top-heavy ſtyle, with clumſy iron balconies at all the windows, and without a ſingle tolerable inn: it is alſo extremely dirty, like Madrid, and is quite after the Spaniſh faſhion.

AMUSEMENTS.

BESIDE the theatre, that daily *rendezvous* of the higher claſſes, cards, concerts, entertainments, and *promenades*, are the uſual recreations here, as in other places. *Commerce* and *Baſſetta*, that well known chance-game, are played here with as much warmth, as *Pharao* is at our Leipzig and Frankfort fairs. *Cheſs*, which in Ruſſia is ſo common, that *Coxe* ſays he ſaw it played in all companies, and even in ſhops, is as rare here as in other parts of Italy. The game of billiards, on the contrary, is univerſally known,

as

as in Germany; yet it is not played in coffee-houſes, but in places particularly appropriated for that purpoſe. The coffee-houſes of Italy have neither the capacious extent, nor the convenience and ſplendour, which you find in thoſe of Vienna, or other cities of Germany; where the gilded clocks, the looking-glaſſes and luſtres, the marble walls, pictures, and other ornaments, ſtrike you as you enter; where political journals and newſpapers, of all names and deſcriptions, ſupply the inquiſitive traveller, with the moſt intereſting accounts from every quarter of Europe, added to thoſe of the place where he happens to reſide. There alſo he is provided with the lateſt diſcoveries in all branches of ſcience, and with the moſt pleaſant voyages and books, as in Beygang's noble muſeum at Leipzig.

Smoaking, nine-pins, ſhooting at a mark, and other amuſements, of which the populace

lace partake, are here, as in the other parts of Italy, entirely unknown. The Grecian horſe-race, in which formerly Hiero diſtinguiſhed himſelf ſo much, that the ſublime Pindar compoſed an ode in his praiſe, is likewiſe at preſent in little uſe among the Sicilians.

But inſtead of it, in ſummer, a race is often run, in which young jockeys, till lately, could have diſplayed their ſkill as brilliantly as at Newmarket. However, ſince different accidents have happened, the *corſa* at preſent conſiſts merely of horſes without any riders. The race is arranged in the following manner:—As ſoon as the hour has ſtruck, and all the people are aſſembled at the place appointed, the firſt ſignal is made at the end of the courſe, by the diſcharge of a mortar. The horſes, capariſoned with ribbons, ſtand by each other in a row, full of ſpirit, and ſtamping with ſuch eagerneſs to commence

mence their career, that they are with difficulty held by their thick manes. Scarcely is the ſignal given, when they are all releaſed at once from the liſts. Every eye is fixed on the fleet animals. They fly with the ſwiftneſs of the wind before the crouded windows, and ſeem to ſeparate, with incredible velocity, the thronged rows of ſpectators: the rods flung about their necks ſtrike them the harder, the quicker their bounding motion becomes in the impetuous career. The laſt is often ſwift enough to overtake his adverſary, until a ſignal at the gaol announces the arrival of the foremoſt. The conqueror, crowned with the prize, is then led back in triumph through the crowd, full of animation: he ſeems to feel his importance, when he receives the applauſe of the female ſpectators, who clap their hands; whilſt the lively trumpets and kettle-drums fill up the interval in delightful and cheering ſounds.

ſounds. After he has paced ſlowly through the long rows of ſpectators, the diſcharge of the mortar gives the ſignal for the ſecond and third ſweepſtakes.

Beſide this amuſement, which they ſeem to have derived from the Greeks, bull-fights have alſo continued from the time of the Spaniards. Theſe are but faint imitations of thoſe which are exhibited before the gate of Alcala, at Madrid, where the Andaluſian bulls, eighteen at a time, in a ſpacious amphitheatre, are firſt attacked with ſpears, by the *Picadores* on horſeback, then purſued with fire-breathing *Vanderillas*, by the *Vanderilleros* on foot; and, at laſt, are killed by the pointed ſword of the *Matador*, who protects himſelf with a mantle of a ſcarlet colour.

This is a curious fight! The blood flows like a ſtream from the breaſt or from the mouth of one horſe; whilſt another, without uttering

uttering any ſound, drags after him his entrails that have been torn out by the bull: now a bull is ſeen, whoſe neck is covered with oats, which juſt before were in the ſtomach of the horſe; then another, running about for ſome time with a ſword penetrating his body, even to the hilt: here a horſe, whoſe belly the bull has gored with his horns, is with his rider precipitated to the ground: there a bull jumps over the barriers, forces the *Tarreros* that are within, leaps almoſt perpendicularly, or kneels upon the ground with his front legs, and expires even before the *Matador* can have time to ſlay him. During the whole ſcene, the ſpectators are kept in continual expectation.

Amongſt the public walks of Palermo, the Flora, or the newly planted flower-garden, is diſtinguiſhed: this is not, indeed, ſo long as the *Villa Reale* at *Naples*; but it is as *open*, and as near the ſea coaſt, as that delightful

ſpot. The fragrant orange-walks, the pellucid fountains, the ſtatues and pavilions, the ſalubrious climate, and the proſpect of the ſea, all conſpire to augment the beauties of this *promenade*.

The botanical garden, ſituated commodiouſly near the *Flora*, with the temple erected at the entrance, which is ornamented with fluted coloſſal pillars, feſtoons, and niches, alſo adds greatly to the attractions of this public walk, which is ſurrounded with iron grates, like the new botanical garden at Madrid; ſo that the eye can trace its extent without entering; and, as it diſplays throughout the year, in the open air, an infinite variety of flowers and the rareſt plants, the *muſa*, the *papyrus*, the *ſugar-cane*, and *palm*, it becomes no trifling ornament to the adjoining Flora.

But the principal promenade is in the vicinity of the ſea coaſt, by the northern gate, the

the *Porta Felice:* an extended ſtraight mole, of quarry-ſtones, is raiſed along the city, in the moſt convenient manner for foot paſſengers of both ſexes. The moſt ſplendid equipages of Palermo here aſſemble in an evening; are driven backwards and forwards, as in the *Corſo* of the other cities of Italy, remain on the left, and on the right, according to their poſſeſſor's fancy, or ſtand ſtill while they enjoy a view of the carriages as they paſs by in a train, and the magnificent proſpect of the open ſea.

Here may be ſeen phaetons of the lateſt faſhion, Engliſh harneſs plated with ſilver, and chariots ornamented with gilding, and with the higheſt varniſh; beſide thoroughbred horſes, which, with their beautiful colours and ſhapes, their fire and ſpirit, attract all eyes towards them. Here the ſpectator may meet ſometimes an intimate friend, who drives his foaming ſteeds; ſometimes

the moſt lovely women, who nod a flattering ſalutation from their open carriages, or converſe familiarly as they paſs by. Mount Pelegrino, which towards the north forms a promontory in the ſea, there exhibits a pictureſque view to the eye of the paſſenger. This was the mountain, on whoſe ſummit formerly Hamilcar, the General of the Carthaginians encamped, to defy the Roman forces: and here the *Numidian cavalry*, the elephants trained and accoutered, the African armour, all preſent themſelves to the imagination.

Below it, at the entrance of the harbour, is the light-houſe, which being illuminated in the evening with a number of lamps, makes, with its crimſon fire, a pleaſant *point de vue*. Near this is heard the whiſpering murmur of the waves, which, with their ceaſeleſs motion, harmonize the mind, and enliven the whole landſcape. New acquaintance

quaintance are formed there ; intereſting news is heard ; ſchemes of entertainment, and parties of pleaſure are arranged ; the day is ended chearfully, and every one returns to his home, by the high city gate, as ſoon as the twilight cloſes.

OTHER CUSTOMS.

AT Palermo, decapitation is performed by means of a machine, ſimilar to the guillotine ; it is called a *Manara.* I ſaw the lawyer *Blaſi* beheaded by it; being convicted of a deſire to effect a revolution in Sicily. Three days before the ſentence was announced, a red flag was diſplayed at the court of juſtice, on which was inſcribed the Latin inſcription, *Diſcute juſtitiam populi.* A confraternity attended the criminal to the ſcene of execution ; and, after the law had taken its due courſe, the ceremonies were

performed as in other countries. Shortly after this event had taken place, I was ſenſibly impreſſed, while I read in the public library a diſſertation, written by the ſame perſon, wherein he repeals the capital puniſhment with *Beccaria*, though, at the ſame time, he fixes the puniſhment for high-treaſon. *Blaſi*, at that period, did not foreſee that he was anticipating his own fate.

I alſo particularly diſliked to ſee thoſe who are condemned to the cord, after hanging ſcarcely half an hour, conſigned to the grave. It was once my lot to be the witneſs of ſo inhuman a practice, when, after the ceremony had concluded, I was proceeding on horſeback out of the town, and, on paſſing near a burying-ground, I ſaw a body conſigned to the earth, which I had beheld not an hour before—an animated being! I communicated the ſentiments which poſſeſſed my mind, upon this ſubject,

to

to the Preſident of the country, the late *Viceroy*, while I was at dinner with him the following day; but both the circumſtance, and my obſervations ariſing from it, ſeemed equally unintereſting to his feelings.

I was ſtill more aſtoniſhed at another period, when, going to witneſs a ſacred ceremony in the church of the Capuchins, on my entrance I perceived, in the middle of the choir, a coffin, cloſed; it was covered with black garments, in which were enveloped the remains of a young female, who had recently expired by the ſide of a deſpairing huſband. I ſhuddered at this ſight, becauſe it has been proved, that as long as putrefaction has not taken place, there remains a principle of animation in the human body.

There is alſo another inſtance of neglect in this country, with regard to drowned perſons. I ſaw a man, who had precipitated

himſelf into the ſea, immediately afterwards brought on ſhore; yet no perſon thought of attempting the ſmalleſt of thoſe experiments, by which in England ſo many examples are annually ſhewn, of re-animation under ſimilar circumſtances.

I did not find at Palermo any of thoſe conductors, the important diſcovery of which adorns the preſent century. I found no electrical machines, by which, in other countries, ſuch effects have been produced upon the human body. Mr. Though, an Engliſhman, eſtabliſhed at Palermo, has, however, that ſpecies of machine in his poſſeſſion: and many invalids have, in conſequence of its influence, been indebted to him for their recovery.

As a general obſervation, it will be found correct, that Sicily is not in a ſtate the moſt perfectly enlightened. There are no inns, but thoſe that are ſo miſerably inconvenient,

that the traveller finds himſelf neceſſitated to lodge in a monaſtery. During my ſojourn in Sicily, I was offered to lodge in two different convents; that of the Carmelites, and the Conventual Friars. Owing to the uncomfortable, as well as ſlovenly, ſtate of the public inns at *Terra Nuova*, the neareſt poſt towards *Malta*, we were obliged to lodge at the Franciſcans, and at *Taormina*, where there ſtill remains the magnificent theatre, ſurrounded by thoſe ſublime proſpects, which Hakert lately travelled from Naples to copy; we called at the Capuchins, who having kept me, with an American gentleman and a numerous ſuite, waiting for half an hour, the door being cloſed againſt us, we were under the neceſſity of ſeeking accommodation at the ſecond-rate inn of the town (kept by a ſhoe-maker), where, not long before, the lovely Princeſs *Belmonte*, the daughter of the Marquis Verac,

Verac, had paſſed a night; being prohibited by the *clauſure* to enter the Capuchin convent. Under ſimilar circumſtances, Lord Wycomb, the ſon of the Marquis of Lanſdowne, in whoſe ſociety I had travelled the preceding year, to the temple of *Segeſta*, and to the ruins of *Agrigentum*, was obliged to dine once in a kitchen, and at another time in a ſtable. Such are the accommodations for travellers, who make the *tour* of Sicily!

Owing to the want of convenient roads, thoſe who proceed on their journey, are conveyed ſeven hundred Engliſh miles, either on horſeback or in palanquins, borne by mules. Our party completed ſuch a diſtance in twenty-eight days. It is neceſſary, on this *route*, to carry not only knives, forks, glaſſes, coffee-cups, and napkins, but even a bed; in neglect of which the traveller is obliged to paſs his nights on ſtraw;

no

no very ſoothing ſituation, after a fatiguing journey.

This is often the caſe in various parts of Italy, where, only within a few years, more commodious inns have been eſtabliſhed. Even on the principal high road from Rome to Naples, both lodgings and proviſions for the table are deplorably defective. At *Capua*, a town only two poſts from Naples, the traveller is obliged to lodge miſerably, and ſtill more wretchedly to dine. On the croſs roads, as from *Naples* to *Manfredonia*, the accommodations are rather worſe than better: unfurniſhed walls, and uncomfortable beds; no caſements at the windows; and the only food, *maccaroni*, prepared with no very tempting cleanlineſs, added to ſheep-cheeſe and water, compoſe the ſcanty accommodations of the unreſted traveller.

LANGUAGE.

THE dialect ſpoken in Sicily differs materially from that of the Neapolitan, and other ſtates of Italy; not only in the extent, but even in the words. No Doric ſounds, like thoſe which gave delightful harmony to the paſtoral ſtrains of *Theocritus*, and which were iterated by Virgil, on Roman and on German ground, now ſalute the ear. No Latin, as it was ſpoken in the days of *Cicero*, is now underſtood by the inferior claſſes of the people. The Arabic, a language cultivated more than three hundred years in that iſland, is ſpoken no longer; though a number of Arabic words ſtill mingle with the Sicilian dialect, as well as with that of Portugal and Spain. By that means ſeveral Arabic expreſſions have been interſperſed

ſperſed in the German vocabulary; though they are not ſo generally uſed as has been repreſented by Mr. Koch, who, in his *Compariſons of the Mineralogic Names of Germans*, attributes even the derivation of the words *gold*, *ſilver*, and *copper*, to the Arabic.

Though the dialect of Sicily deviates from the purity of the Tuſcan, as widely as the Swiſs does from the German ſpoken in Saxony, there are poems printed in the Sicilian language; and theſe convey as dulcet a tone to the ear of a native, as did the Attic to that of the Greeks. They even commiſerate the German pronunciation, as an inhabitant of *Nanking*, the ancient capital of China, contemns the corrupted jargon of the ſouth-eaſtern province *Fokien*. Yet, where the various vowels of the German, the *o*, the *u*, and the *a*, are properly accented, the language is in no degree leſs mellifluous than the French, or the Hungarian.

To

To exemplify the Sicilian dialect, I here preſent to my reader four lines of a celebrated compoſition, in that language:

Occiuzzi nivuri, ſi taliati,
Facciti cadiri caſi e citati!
Jeu muru debuli di petra taju
Cunſideratilu, ſi allura caju!

TRANSLATION.

Thou brilliant eye! whoſe magic glance
Can bid the loftieſt fabric ſhake!
O! ſay, can I, who feebly gaze,
Reſiſt thy ſtrong and piercing blaze;
Nor in a ſweet delicious trance
Fall proſtrate, for thy ſake?

It is to be obſerved, that the Italian language owes its profuſion of vowels to that of the Sicilian; and to thoſe vowels it is alſo indebted for its ſweet and melodious ſound: for that offspring of the Latin ſhould, like her ſiſters, the Spaniſh, the French, and the Wallachian, be terminated by conſonants. But, in the court of Frederick the Second, when

when the Arabic was the learned language of Sicily, it received thoſe vowels which ſound ſo well in the dialect of the *Koran.*

At the court of Palermo, the Italian became the book language. The earlieſt of the Italian poets were from Sicily; and, according to the teſtimony of Dante and Petrarca, were denominated Sicilians. Frederick was himſelf a poet: and not long ſince a *ſonetto* was publiſhed at Palermo, written by that Emperor to his miſtreſs; in which he deſcribes the graces of her perſon, and his ardent paſſion for her, in that language, which is ſo peculiarly adapted to ſuch a ſubject.

There is alſo another poetical compoſition ſtill extant, from the pen of *Ciullo d'Alcamo*, the moſt remote of the Sicilian poets. It was publiſhed at the ſame period with the *ſonetto* of Frederick; but being, perhaps, one of the moſt beautiful, as well as the

the moſt ancient ſpecimen of the Italian language that has appeared, I here preſent my readers with a copy:

Propoſta.

ROSA freſca aulentiſſima, ca pari in ver l' eſtate;
Le donne te deſiano pulcelle maritate;
Traheme d'eſte focora, ſe t'eſte a bolontate.
Per te non aio abento nocte e dia
Penzando pur di voi, madonna mia.

Riſpoſta.

Se di mene trabalgliati, follia lo ti fa fare,
Lo mare poteresti arompere avanti a te menare;
L' abete d'eſto secolo tutto quanto aſſembrare.
Havere me non poteria eſto monno;
Auanti li cavalli mari ſonno.

Propoſta.

Si li cavalli attoniti avanti foſſio mortto,
Caiſi mi perderà lo ſolazzo e lo diportto.
Quando ci paſſo, e veioti, roſa freſca del' ortto,
Bono conforto donimi tutt'ore,
Poniamo ca s'aiunga il noſtro amore.

Riſpoſta.

Ke'l noſtro amore aiungaſi non boglio m'attalenti;
Se ci ſi trova paremo col gli altri miei parenti,
Guarda non t'argolgano queſti forti corenti:
Como ti ſeppe bona la venuta,
Io ti conſiglio, che ti guardi a la partuta.

Propoſta—

Propoſta.

Se tuoi parenti trovanmi, e che mi pozon fare?
Vna difenſa mettoci di dumi . . . .
Non mi tocara patreto, per quanto avere ambare.
Viva lo 'mperadore graz' a Deo,
Entendi, bella, quel che ti dico eo.

Riſpoſta.

Tu me non laſci vivere nè ſera nè matino,
Donna mi ſono di perperi d'auro maſſa motino:
Se tanto avere donaſſimi quanto à lo Saladino,
E per aiunta quant' à lo Soldano,
Tocaremè non poteria la mano.

Propoſta.

Molte ſono le femine, c'anno dura la teſta,
E l' omo con parabole le domina ed à 'n poteſta
Tanto intorno percazala fin chè l' hà 'n ſua podeſta;
Femmina d' omo non ſi puo tenere,
Guardati, bella, pur de ripentère.

Riſpoſta.

Ch'eo mene penteſſe davanti foſſio auccisa,
Ca nulla bona femina per me foſſe ripriſa:
Et ſera ci paſſaſti, o coremo, alla diſtiſa:
A queſti ti riſpoſa canzoneri,
Le tue parabole a me non piaccion gueri.

Propoſta.

Dònna, quante ſon le ſciantora, che m'ai miſo a lo core,
E ſolo pur penzando . . . .
Femina d'eſto ſecolo tanto non à mai amore
Quanto mo . . . .
Bene credo, che mi foſti diſtinata.

Riſpoſta.

Se diſtinata foſſeti, caderia dal' alteze,
Che male meſe forano in te le mie belleze:
Se tua adiveniſſimi, talgliariami le treze.
E comſore me tenno . . . .
Che mai tochino le perſone.

Propoſta.

Se tu comſore arementi donna col viſo zete
Alo moſtero . . . .
Per tanta prova vencierre, faralo volentieri;
Con tico ſtao la ſera, e lo matino,
Che ſogno ch'io ti tenga al mio domino.

Riſpoſta.

Hoimè tapina miſera, com'ajo reo diſtinato,
Gieſo Chriſto l'altiſſimo del core m'è aitato
. . piſtime ad abattere in omo beſtemiato,
Cierca la terra, che ſte . . . .
Chiù bella donna di me troverai.

Propoſta.

Ciercat' aio Calabria, Toſcana, e Lombardia,
Puglia, Conſtantinopoli, Genova, Piſa, Soria,
La Magna, e Babilonia, tutta la Barberia;
Donna . . . .
. . . . . .

Riſpoſta.

Poi tanto trabagliaſti, facioti meo pregheri,
Che tu vadi adomanimi a mia mare: ed a mon peri
Se dare mi ti dengnano, menami a lo moſteri;
E ſpoſami devanti dela jente,
E poi farò lo tuo commannamento.

Pro-

Propoſta.

Di ciò che dici, vitama, niente non ti bale,
Ca de le tue parabole fatte n'ò ponti, e ſcale,
Penne penzaſti mettere, ſon ricadute l'ale,
E dato t'ajo la bolta ſottana;
Dunque, ſe poi, teniti villana.

Riſpoſta.

En paura non mettermi di nullo manganiello,
I' ſtomi 'n eſta grolia d' eſto forte caſtiello,
Prezzo le tuo parabole meno che d' un zitello,
Se tu non levi, e vattine di quaci,
Se tu ci foſſi mortto, ben mi chiaci.

Propoſta.

Dunque voreſti, vitama, ca per te foſſe ſtrutto?
Se morto eſſer deboci, o dintagliato tutto,
Di quaci non mi moſera, ſe non aio de lo frutto;
Lo quale ſtao nelo tuo ſordino,
Diſiolo la ſera e lo matino.

Riſpoſta.

Di quello frutto non abero conti, nè cabalieri,
Molto lo diſiano marcheſi, e juſtizieri,
Avere non de potero, gironde molto feri;
Intendi bene ciò che bol dire
Ben'eſte di millonze lo tuo havire.

Propoſta.

Molti ſono li garoſani che ſalmandai,
Bella, non diſpregiareme, s'avanti non m'aſſay:
Se vento è in proda, e girati, e giungeti ale prai
A rimembrare taoſte parole
Cade traſta animella aſſai midole.

Riſpoſta.

Macara se doleſſeti, cha cadeſſe angoſciato,
La gente ci coreſſero da traverſo, e d'allato,
Tura meve dicieſono acorri eſto malnato;
Non ti dignara porgie e la mano,
Per quanto avere a'l Papa e lo Soldano.

Propoſta.

Deo lo voleſſe, vitama, ca te foſſe morto 'n caſa
L'arma manderia conſola, cà dì e notte pantaſa;
La giente ti chiameranno oi periura, malvaſa,
Ca morto l'omo in caſata traìte:
Sanz' omni colpa levimi la vita.

Riſpoſta.

Se tu non levi, e vatine cola maledizione,
Li frati mei ti trovano dintro chiſſa magione:
Bello mi ſoſcio, perdici le perſone,
Ca mene ſe' venuto a ſermonare,
Parente ned'amico non t'ave aiotare.

Propoſta.

Amene non aitano amici, nè parenti
I' ſtrani mi ſono, carama, e fra eſta bona iente
Or fà un anno, vitama ch' entrata mi ſe' 'n mente
Dicanno ti viſtifti lo traiuto,
Bella, da quello iorno ſono fornuto.

Riſpoſta.

Ai tanto 'namoraſtiti i vola lo traito,
Come ſe foſſe porpora, iſcarlato, o ſciamito:
S'a le vangiele iurimi, che mi ſia a marito,
Avere me non poterà eſto m onno:
Avanti in mare ijtomi al profonno.

Pro-

Propoſta.

Se tu nel mare gititi, donna corteſe e fina,
Dereto mi ti miſera per tuta la marina,
Poi catergareti troboreti ala rina;
Sola per queſta coſa ad impretiare,
Con tico m'ajo a giungiere, e pecare.

Riſpoſta.

Segnomi in patre, en filio, e di ſanto Mateo,
So ca non ſe' tu retico, o figlio di giudeo,
E con tali parabole non udire dire ancheo
Morttaſi la femina a lontutto
Perdici lo laboro, e lo dir dotto.

Propoſta.

Bene lo faccio, carama, altro non poza fare
Se chiſſo non arcomplimi, laſſone lo cantare;
Fallo, mia donna, plazati, che bene lo puoi fare,
Ancora tu non m'ami, molto t'amo,
Si m'ai preſo come lo peſce all' amo.

Riſpoſta.

Sazo che m'ami, & amoti di core paladino,
Levati ſuſo, e vattine, tornaci alo matino:
Se ciò, che dico, faciemi, di buon core t'amo, e fino:
Queſto ben t'impromotto, e ſanza falglia,
Tè la mea fede, che m'ai in tua balglia.

Propoſta.

Perzò che dici, carama, neiente non mi movo,
Inanti prenni, e ſcannami, tollo eſto cortello novo,
Eſto fatto fare poteſi inanti ſcalfi un uovo.
Arcomplimi talento, mica bella,
Che l'arma colo core mi s'inſtella.

Riſpoſta.

Ben ſazo, l'arma doleti, com'ommo, c'ave arſura,
Eſto fatto non poterſi per null'altra miſura
Se non m'ale vangelie, che mo ti dico, iura;
Avere me non puoi in tua podeſta,
Inanti prenni, e talgliami la teſta.

Propoſta.

L'evangelie, carama, ch'eo le porto in ſino.
Alo moſtero prefile, non ci era lo patrino,
Sor'eſto libro iuroti, mai non ti vengno mino:
Arcomplimi talento in caritate,
Che l'arma me ne ſta in ſutilitate.

Riſpoſta.

Meo Sire, poi iuraſtimi, eo tutta quanto incienno,
Sono alla tua preſenza, da voi non mi difenno,
S'eo min eſpreſo aoiti, mercè a voi m'arenno.
Alo . . . .
Che chiſta coſa m'è data in bentura.

CHEATS

IT is related by *Cicero*, who ſojourned for ſome time in Sicily, that *Cajus Canius*, a Roman Knight, had choſen the Sicilian climate for his home. He therefore wiſhed to

to purchaſe a villa near Syracuſe, which was at that period the capital of the iſland, where he might entertain his friends, and the diſtinguiſhed females of that country. *Pythius*, a wealthy banker, having obtained information of his deſire, acquainted him that he had an handſome villa to let, which, though he did not mean to diſpoſe of entirely, *Canius* might enjoy, as frequently as he thought proper. To this propoſal he alſo added, an invitation to dine with him the following day. The banker having an extenſive circle of acquaintance with all ranks of people, gave orders that on the ſucceeding day a number of fiſhermen ſhould employ themſelves in their occupation near the garden of his villa. At the appointed hour *Canius* was punctual to his invitation. *Pythius* had prepared a ſplendid repaſt; during which the labourers in their boats, bringing the fiſh they had taken, and placing

them before their employer, *Canius*, aſtoniſhed at ſo extraordinary a proceeding, demanded to know the reaſon why ſo many fiſhermen in boats were thronging to the ſhore. *Pythius* replied, that there was nothing ſingular in the circumſtance, for that the fiſhermen were accuſtomed to aſſemble on that ſpot, as the principal fiſhery of Syracuſe.

On receiving this intelligence, *Canius* became more deſirous than ever of purchaſing the villa. *Pythius* at firſt affected a reluctance to part with it; but, after ſome heſitation, at length conſented. *Canius*, being ſufficiently wealthy, immediately paid the ſum demanded, and invited his friends to his new habitation on the following day. On his arrival, before his gueſts, and beholding no fiſhing-boats; his conſternation was only to be equalled by his diſappointment. Suppoſing their abſence was the conſequence

of

of ſome holiday, he enquired earneſtly of a neighbour; but the anſwer convinced him that he had been deceived, and that the ſpot which he inhabited was not the fiſhing-place of Syracuſe. The indignation which *Canius* felt was infinite; "but he had no remedy," ſays *Cicero*, (de Offic. lib. iii. cap. 14.) "for *Acquilius*, my colleague, had not then publiſhed the law *de dolo malo:* and barbariſm was ſtill ſo prevalent in Sicily, that no other law then exiſted for the puniſhment of ſuch an impoſition."

The modern capital has alſo produced many remarkable impoſtors. The well-known Joſeph Balſamo, afterwards called the Count *Caglioſtro*, was a native of Palermo. At his trial in the Baſtile, he aſſerted that he was born at Malta, and reared at Medina, in Arabia, in the houſe of the *Mufti Salaahym*, where he was known by the name of *Ahharat*: his eſtabliſhment conſiſted

fifted of his mentor, *Altotas*, and three eunuchs, who were his attendants.

At the age of twenty-one years he commenced his travels, with the caravan, to *Mecca*: there he refided during three years, with the Sheriff, who, at the termination of that period, difmiffed him, with tears of forrow, at the fame time exclaiming, "*Farewell! unhappy Son of Nature!*"

He then proceeded, with his mentor, towards Egypt, where he became a pupil of the Egyptian prieſts, who initiated him in their myſtic ſciences. After having paſſed three years more in viſiting the principal kingdoms of Africa and Aſia, he returned, by Rhodes, to Malta, and to his father, the Grand Maſter, *Pinto*; declaring himſelf, at the ſame time, to be his ſon, by the *Princeſs of Trebiſonte*. Here he and his mentor relinquiſhed the oriental habit, and *Balſamo* was recognized as the Count *Caglioſtro*.

Altotas

Altotas being dead, he declared that he came to Sicily, accompanied by a Knight of Malta, the *Principe Caramanico*, who was afterwards Viceroy of Sicily.

At Palermo he commenced his practice of deception. Being one day in company with ſome friends, they wiſhed to know in what occupation a lady of their acquaintance was employed at that moment. He drew a ſquare on the floor, and, upon paſſing his hand over it, the figure of the lady became viſible: ſhe was ſeated, with three gentlemen, at a gaming-table. A meſſenger was inſtantaneouſly diſpatched to her lodging, and ſhe was found preciſely in the ſituation which had been preſented by *Caglioſtro*.

At another time, he intimated to a ſilverſmith that there was hidden, near the town, a conſiderable treaſure; that he only required ſome aſſiſtance to become the poſſeſſor of

it. At the ſame time he diſplayed about ſixty ounces of gold, (near thirty guineas) as ſamples of the ore. The ſilverſmith, however, inſtead of finding the promiſed treaſure, was waylaid and moſt inhumanly beaten by ſeveral powerful aſſailants, in the habits of devils, and afterwards ſent home to lament his credulity. Speedily after this event, *Ceglioſtro* thought it adviſable to prepare for his departure from Palermo, and to make ſome other ſpot the ſcene of his impoſtures.

A character no leſs myſterious has been ſince exhibited by *Joſeph Vella*, a native of *Malta*. This perſonage alſo circulated a report, that the ſame Grand Maſter, *Pinto*, had ſent him to Rome, to the College of the *Propaganda*. There he is ſaid to have ſtudied the Arabic during ſeven years, under the learned *Aſſemanni*; and afterwards to have been ſent by the Grand Maſter to the Levant,

Levant, where he travelled through *Paleſtine*, *Egypt*, and *Barbary*, during ſeveral years.

Above ten years ago, he cauſed a report to be propagated over Europe, that he had recovered the loſt works of *Livy* in an Arabian manuſcript. All hope has been long relinquiſhed, reſpecting the *decades* of *Livy*, which are ſtill wanting in an Arabic tranſlation*. *Pietro della Valle*, *Erpenius Clodius*, and others, were of opinion, that thoſe precious remains were preſerved in the library of the Grand Seignior, at Conſtantinople †. *Savary* conjectures that not only *Livy*, but *Tacitus* alſo, and *Diodorus*, of Sicily, have been tranſlated into the Arabic ‡: and Sir William Jones wiſhed that alſo the works of *Archimedes*, the *Newton* of

* There are fifty-nine Books loſt.

† Toderini's Letter. Turca, tom. ii. p. 46.

‡ Lettres ſur l'Egypte, tom. iii. let. 79.

Sicily,

Sicily, might be reſtored, by the aid of Arabic verſions *.

To the diſcovery of the Arabic *Livy*, in Sicily, the neweſt travels of *Bartel*, *Salis Marſhlin*, *Stollberg*, and *Jacobi* have references. *Vella*, purſuing the ſame idea, ſpeaks of a French painter, (*Fabré*, or *Favay*) who, as he was drawing the moſque of St. Sophia, at Conſtantinople, had found on the cornice of that magnificent fabric a packet, which he took poſſeſſion of, and which he preſented to the Grand Maſter, *Pinto*, at Malta. He is ſaid to have preſented this valuable relique to his favourite, *Vella*, with the following words: "Take this manuſcript, it will ſome day render you happy!"

I was given to underſtand the ſame when I firſt travelled to Palermo, in the year 1794, in order to examine that manuſcript; and I then hoped that if *Livy* could be found in

* Aſiat. Reſearch. vol. I. The Second Diſcourſe.

a country,

a country, which was poſſeſſed by the Arabs during ſeveral centuries, other works of the ancients might alſo be recovered. But I drew the veil from the impoſture, and publicly declared the truth at my return to Vienna *.

Not ſatisfied with having amuſed a conſiderable part of Europe, during ſeveral years, with that deluſion, and with perſuading an Engliſh lady to offer, with Britiſh generoſity, in the year 1794, a ſum ſufficient for the publication of that part of the Roman Hiſtory ſo much deſired, he availed himſelf of the arrival of an ambaſſador from Morocco; who, returning from Naples, was by contrary winds, detained during ſome days at Palermo. He declared that the African Miniſter had found in the abbey of St. Martin, near Palermo, (whither Vella

* Reiſe von Warſchau nach der Hauptſtadt Sicilien. Wien. 1795.

accom-

accompanied him) a curious Arabian MS. containing the hiſtory of Sicily, during the period of the Arabic dominion.

As the tradition of thoſe times is extremely defective, this report was popularly ſanctioned. An opulent Biſhop of Palermo expended conſiderable ſums in the tranſlation of the work, in ſix volumes, which appeared in the courſe of ten years; and it was not till the greateſt part was completed, that the manuſcript was diſcovered to be a forgery *.

The impoſtor alſo perſuaded his Sicilian Majeſty to believe, that a ring, with an antique inſcription, in Arabic, diſcovered near *Sora*, in Calabria, had been the nuptial ring of Roger, the founder of the Sicilian monarchy; which formerly had been but a pro-

* The author of this work, laſt year, publiſhed an account of this impoſture, both in the German and the French languages.

vince,

vince, till it was by him created a kingdom. To this myſterious relique of antiquity he aſcribed the following line:

Annulus nuptialis Rogeriî—

and report affirms, that his Majeſty was ſo highly gratified by the preſent, that he conſtantly wore it on his finger during his journey to Vienna. For my own part, I did not heſitate to declare to Mr. Daniele, the royal hiſtoriographer, who had purchaſed it for the Sovereign, that the inſcription ſpoke neither of Roger, nor of a nuptial ring: and the tranſlations of it, by the two learned orientaliſts, Mr. *Sacy*, at Paris, and Mr. *Adler*, at Copenhagen, fully confirm my opinion; the latter of which, as being more accordant with my ſentiments upon the ſubject, I here tranſcribe in the original characters.

TRANSLATION BY MR. ADLER.

يسير الحق من القدر
كل من راي فلا غدر

Truth and Juſtice come from God! who perceives it does not err. *

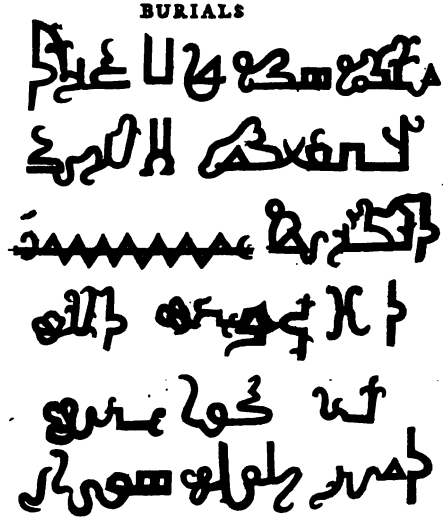
The ſame author made uſe of falſe inſcriptions, to prove that *Meſſina* was, in the

* The other tranſlation wholly differs from this, and has been publiſhed in Mr. Millin's Magazin Encycloped. année 8. N. 23.

time

time of the Saracens, denominated *Zankle*, a name which Meſſina had loſt a thouſand years before the arrival of the Arabs, when the Meſſenians came from Peloponeſus. For that purpoſe he pretended that he found *Carmatic* inſcriptions at *Meſſina*, which he publiſhed at Palermo.

I here preſent a ſpecimen of thoſe Carmatic characters; for I was myſelf at Meſſina, with a view to make reſearches reſpecting that inſcription. No perſon among the learned of that town ever knew of it, neither was it in the palace of M. Ruffo, where *Vella* ſaid it was preſerved; and it is unqueſtionably proved, by the *Nubian Geographer*, and all other Arabic Hiſtorians, that Meſſina was not, under the Saracens, denominated *Zankle*, but Meſſina.



Vella tranſlated it as follows:—"Congregabimus vos. Volumus neque gratiarum actionem, neque remunerationem nifi faciem Dei liberalis. Safian filius Kafagia, Emir Zanklæ."

Which tranſlation, although right, and agreeable to that which Mr. *Tychſen* gave, is nevertheleſs fruitleſs, the original being forged.

SOLEMNITIES.

IN addition to the annual feſtivals, in the different churches of the capital, and of the neighbouring places, there are fairs, where booths and ſhops are erected, and where the beauties of Palermo aſſemble to diſplay their taſte, and their attractions. There is likewiſe every year, at the beginning of July, a ſolemn *fête*, which the Engliſh traveller *Brydone* has exquiſitely deſcribed, in his *Tour* through Sicily: though, as few ſtrangers ſojourn at Palermo during the ſultry ſeaſon, the work is not ſo univerſally known as it deſerves to be.

A triumphal car, three tier in altitude, is annually erected at the *Porta Felice*, upon which is placed an orcheſtra, with the image of *Saint Roſalia*, whoſe *fête* is thus cele-

brated. This car is drawn, on the firſt day, from the Viceroy's palace, through the principal ſtreets of Palermo, to the ſea-ſide. From twenty to thirty horſes, with a proportionate train of attendants, convey this majeſtic machinery, (which towers even to the third ſtory of the houſes) repreſenting an altar, ſumptuouſly decorated with ſilver branches, for tapers, and vaſes feſtooned with flowers. At the diſtance of every twenty paces the cavalcade is arreſted in its progreſs, in order to afford the ſpectators a view of its ſplendour; while the orcheſtra ſends forth the moſt harmonious ſtrains. During the whole of the afternoon the proceſſion parades through the ſtreets, till it arrives at the termination of that which croſſes the whole city.

This magnificent cavalcade is ſucceeded by the moſt vivid illuminations. The *Caſſero*, a ſtreet of one Italian mile in length, extending

extending from the northern to the ſouthern gate, is decorated with dazzling pyramids of light, which form at once a rich and brilliant perſpective.

Near the town-houſe, a fountain throws out its glittering ſtreams, encircled with orange-trees, and aromatic plants of the moſt beautiful deſcription. This ſpot being alſo illuminated, affords a delightful *promenade*, as well as a lively ſcene, to the ſpectator.

Along the ſea-ſhore, on the public walk, the walls of the city are covered with blazing lamps, which magically attract the eye, appearing three times more extended in length, than they really are by day-light. The whole ſeems ſtudded with brilliants, as the ſportive imagination has deſcribed in fairy imagery. The luſtre of ſo many artificial ſtars, reflected on the ocean; the gay and ever-moving throngs; the ſounds of har-

mony, and the ſuperb fire-work, which riſes on the ſea-ſhore, accompanied by cannonading from the veſſels, (repreſenting a marine engagement, and intermingled with rockets whizzing through the air) preſent a ſcene which is perhaps unequalled.

On the fifth and laſt day of this annual feſtival, a proceſſion is diſplayed, in which every order of monks exhibits a ſtage, bearing their particular ſaints. Some of theſe platforms are again ſo lofty, that they are on a level with the third ſtories of the buildings; and they are alſo of ſuch magnitude, that more than thirty men are employed to bear them. The reliques of *Saint Roſalia* are borne at the cloſe of the proceſſion, in a ſilver coffin. The whole Senate, and all the Colleges, accompany the cavalcade, and the evening concludes with a fire-work and illuminations.

A ſimilar ceremony is diſplayed at Conſtantinople,

ſtantinople, when a *Donanmaw* is celebrated. During five, ſix, or ſeven nights, all the ſtreets of that ſpacious city, with their ſhops, magazines, and public buildings, are illuminated in a manner the moſt brilliant and diverſified. The palaces of the Grand Vizier, the Reis Effendi, and all the nobility, on that occaſion, diſplay their magnificence. The *Beſeſtan*, or the principal Exchange in that capital, is decorated with Perſian and Indian ſtuffs, Damaſcene ſabres and arms, oriental gems, and pearls in a ſumptuous profuſion. Every individual endeavours to attract the notice of the multitude towards his habitation, by the diſplay of fountains, artificial gardens, mirrors, luſtres, and furniture of maſſy ſilver. The enchanting *kioſks* *, near the ſea; the illuminated *minarets* †; the lofty *dchamees* ‡, form

* Perſian ſummer-houſes.

† Turrets of the Mahometan temples.

‡ The great moſques.

a luxuriant

a luxuriant proſpect. On the ocean, the ſiege of Rhodes, Malta, or ſome other maritime place, is repreſented, while the Grand Seignior viſits the ſplendid manſions of the foreign Miniſters.

On a horſe, whoſe front and cheſt are adorned with jewels, whoſe covering, embroidered with gold and Arabian pearl, ſweeps along the ground, guarded on both ſides by attendants, dreſſed in golden drapery, and crowned with waving feathers, ſits the Sultan: his robe is of green, bordered with ſable; on the ſides of which five rows of diamonds ſuperbly glitter. His head is ſurrounded with a white turban, which is faſtened in the front by a jewel of conſiderable magnitude, from which iſſues a plume of dazzing brilliants.

A long train of *Janiſſaries*, *Kapidchibaſhees*, *Tſhouſhes*, and *Tchohadaurs*, attend either before, or around the horſe of their Sovereign.

Sovereign. Behind him rides the *Grand Vizier*, with a quadrangular turban, about which a band of gold is twined obliquely. A numerous ſuite encircles the horſe of ſtate, which majeſtically bears his coſtly trappings. Near him follows the *Mufti*, in another ſpecies of habit, attended alſo by his retinue; with the *Kapoodan Pachaw*, the *Agaw*, or general of the janiſſaries; the Chief of the Eunuchs; both the ſupreme Judges, that of *Anatolia*, and that of *Roomeli*; the *Haſnadawr*, or treaſurer, who diſtributes money; the *Silihdawr*, or armour-bearer, who carries the precious ſabre of the Sultan on his ſhoulder; the Court Interpreter, who is a Greek Prince, and many others. This extenſive and coſtly cavalcade proceeds during a quarter of an hour; and is conſidered as the moſt ſplendid on the *Bairam*, or Mahometan Eaſter, when the whole Court is preſent in grand gala.

BURIALS.

AMONG the objects moſt curious to the eye of the traveller, at Palermo, are the ſubterranean vaults of the Capuchins; where, like thoſe of their convent at Rome, near the palace of Barberini, a gallery of dead bodies is to be ſeen. Monks are there placed in an erect attitude, covered with their *capuch*, their beards ſtill pendent, and their perſons ſtill preſerving their original form. The wall is ſymmetrically ſet with human bones; and the front of the altar is compoſed of teeth, ſtrikingly reſembling the *Moſaic* pavement of *Pompéjé*. Thus I ſaw in the famous *Caveau des Cordeliers*, at Toulouſe, near five hundred uncorrupted dead bodies, which are preſerved in the ſubterraneous vaults of that monaſtery.

The

The view of theſe cadavres, reclining againſt the wall, or almoſt in an erect poſition, was rendered ſtill more horrible by the faint light of a lantern, which was borne by the ſexton who attended me.

When I evinced marks of aſtoniſhment, my guide, placing his finger under the chin of one, whoſe face I was earneſtly contemplating, raiſed the body from the ground, as though it had been made of paper; ſo light was this withered emblem of mortality.

It is well known that the Egyptians, by the exerciſe of the embalming art, preſerved their dead bodies, and even carried the perfection of it to ſuch extent, that the phyſiognomy remained, as in a ſtate of animation. It was in this extraordinary way, that they were accuſtomed to preſerve their anceſtors, even for a long ſeries of years; and it was a practice among them, not only to ſhew theſe ſamples of their ſkill to all their friends,

friends, but even at their banquets, to place them at the table.

At Palermo, as is related by *D'Orville*, the proceſs is ſomewhat diſſimilar. The corpſe is there extended upon a kind of iron grate, where it remains ſix months over a ſwiftly-gliding water, by whoſe rapid circulation of air, it becomes perfectly dried: they then clothe it, and place it in a niche, on which is affixed the name of the perſon ſo preſerved, and the date of the period when he died. I once ſaw at Florence, that ſingular repreſentation of the diſſolution of the human frame, which is there preſerved in wax-work. It was executed in the time of Ferdinand the Second, of the Houſe of Medici, and is known by the name of *Lo Sfaſcello*. It is impoſſible for any thing of the kind to be more perfect. The correctneſs of the execution, the ſelection of colours, and the perfect proportion of all the

the parts, render that model, as well as its companion, which repreſents the plague, *chef d'œuvres*. Theſe extraordinary works of the *Abate Lumbo*, their artificer, were again purchaſed by the preſent Grand Duke of Tuſcany, at a conſiderable expence; his father, the Emperor Leopold, having made them a preſent to his archiater, Dr. *Laguſius*.

The public burial-place at Palermo is alſo remarkable. It forms a ſpecies of calendar; and every day in the year has its particular grave, where thoſe who die on it are buried. The ſpace allotted to each body is of an equal ſize. They form regular rows each month; and the burier may reckon the days by the number of the graves.

There are likewiſe, at Palermo, places for the dead of a more ancient deſcription.

In the year 1785, catacombs were diſcovered

vered without the gate of *Offuna*. They are defcribed by the Prince *Terremuzza*, in the Roman Anthology. I found them fimilar to the catacombs of Saint Sebaftian, at Rome. But as the corpfes had their faces turned towards the eaft, with *Punic* infcriptions affixed to them, fimilar to thofe found at *Malta*, *Eryx* and *Mozia*, that learned Sicilian, entertained no doubt, but that they were graves of the *Carthaginians*, who, as the firft *Punic* war evinces, were once in poffeffion of that ifland.

Thofe of the Greeks, which are frequently difcovered in Sicily, (fince the Sovereign recalled the prohibition of digging) are ftill more extraordinary. There may be contemplated thofe exquifite Greek vafes, which have been erroneoufly confidered as *Etrufcan:* they are now proved to be of Grecian manufacture, having not only Greek infcriptions, but being alfo precifely fimilar to thofe which

which the Engliſh, *Graves* and *Paars*, have recently found at Athens, and in the iſland of *Milo*. Mr. Tiſchbein ſhewed me, in the collection of Sir William Hamilton, ſeveral of thoſe vaſes, which, by the indelicacy of their decorations, are rendered unfit for public inſpection. The moſt beautiful of theſe vaſes came from Sicily.

In addition to the Greek graves, there are alſo thoſe of the Saracens: their inſcriptions are in the *Carmatic* characters; ſeveral of them have been publiſhed by Mr. Gregorio. * Three of them, lately diſcovered in that capital, have been tranſlated by Mr. *Vaſalli*, the compoſer of a Malteſe Dictionary and Grammar, at Rome. And the inſcription of Palermo, publiſhed by the Engliſh writer Brydone, as an ancient *Chal-*

* Rerum arabicar quæ ad Hiſt. Sic. ſpectant ampla Collectio, Panormi, 1790, fol.

daick one *, of great importance, is nothing but an Arabic epitaph, in *Carmatic* characters

* Tour through Sicily and Malta, new edit. Lond. 1795, vol. ii. p. 165; and again publiſhed this year by Mr. Fry, in his Pantographia, page 38, as the 18 Chaldean.

SOCIETY.

THE general character of ſociety is not ſo free at Palermo, as it is at Naples. The lively and ingenuous diſpoſition of the Neapolitan, ſeems not ſo ſtrongly the characteriſtic of the Sicilian. However, that formality of manner is not prevalent, which is to be obſerved in ſmaller towns; for the inhabitants of Sicily are neither haughty nor reſerved. Foreigners are there received with particular hoſpitality and affability. The natives are always eager to congratulate the arrival of ſtrangers, and every ſtranger is made welcome; but the Engliſh are peculiarly favoured with attention, when they viſit Sicily. They ſpeak ſparingly, and they pay liberally; and conſequently they are more cordially greeted than the Italian,

who utters more words in one day, than an Engliſhman will ſuffer to eſcape him during a week. In addition to this loquacity, the Italian has little to throw away; which is not always the caſe with the Engliſh traveller.

The converſation here is ſimilar to that of other organized European ſocieties: and the news of the day, or the entrance or departure of a packet-boat, is generally the leading topic; for, by this conveyance, all intelligence, letters, and paſſengers, come from Naples; excepting, that once a week a poſt arrives, by way of Meſſina; but the letters are a fortnight after date, by the time that they are received (through Calabria, and the northern coaſt of Sicily) at the capital, whilſt the packet-boats croſs the ſea ſometimes in thirty-ſix hours, and at others, they accompliſh the voyage in eighteen. When the late Viceroy ſuddenly died, the

Court

Court of Naples was apprized of the unexpected event on the following day; although the ſame intelligence, by land, did not arrive till the expiration of a fortnight.

In addition to theſe ſources of information, ſhips ſometimes convey news by the way of *Genoa*, *Leghorn*, and other ſea-ports; but the harbour of Palermo not being much frequented, this does not often happen. Nevertheleſs, travellers from *Syracuſe*, *Catania*, *Trapani*, and other cities of Sicily, perpetually arrive at the capital, by which means an univerſal communication is kept up: and accounts conſtantly reach Palermo from *mezzo Monreale*, and the *Colli*, where the gentry of the capital have their country-houſes. *Caſini*, after the moſt exquiſite taſte, with all the conveniencies of life, are there to be met with. But the ſpot moſt admired for its beautiful *villas* and gardens, is the *Bagheria*: here the months of Novem-

ber and December are paſſed; for at the time when we are accuſtomed to inhabit towns and cities, the nobility of Palermo, as is frequently the caſe in England, viſit their country reſidences; for which reaſon they are rendered worthy of conſiderable attention.

Sometimes the converſation of mixed ſociety is interrupted by the expreſſion of fine features, and the ſoftneſs of inſinuating attentions. Scandal alſo bears its part in the topics of diſcuſſion; and, as in all other places, its influence is not without a leading feature. Self-love and ſelf-praiſe are often exemplified at Palermo; yet, upon an impartial inveſtigation of ſociety and manners, the Sicilians are an enlightened people. No perſon is ever heard to queſtion another upon the ſubject of religion: all deſcriptions of ſects, from the Romiſh to the *Herrnhut*, are tolerated, the Jews alone excepted; who,

who, though the inquiſition is aboliſhed, have yet received no permiſſion to return.

The theatre, which in many parts of Europe attracts ſo large a portion of public intereſt, excites but little attention at Palermo. Horſe-races, illuminations and feſtivals, engroſs the converſation of the people. I have frequently been queſtioned whether I had ever viſited in other parts of the globe, ſo fine a city as Palermo, or beheld a feſtival ſo ſplendid as that of St. Roſalia; with many other obſervations, reſpecting the proud and diſtinguiſhed ſuperiority of its prerogatives.

Political papers are here, as in all other parts of Italy, extremely ſcarce. Two half ſheets appear weekly from the printing-office of *Solli*; theſe are but of little importance as to intereſt or communication; the reſtrictions being extremely rigid, and the intelligence which they contain being generally two

months after date: thus information of events is very frequently circulated, as concluſive, which arrives, imperfectly commenced three weeks after, by the way of Calabria.

The papers, publiſhed at Naples, are little ſuperior in point of regulation. Thoſe who do not particularly attend to Court intelligence, are very ſparingly amuſed. Their literary information is very ſcantily diſtributed, and the little they publiſh treats purely on the general ſubject of literature. No faſhionable or entertaining magazine; no periodical works of fancy, or of knowledge; no miſcellaneous productions, or intereſting journals are here printed. Every month the *Giornale Letterario* appeared at Naples; for that of Palermo was concluded during my reſidence there. Romances and voyages are, when compared with our profuſion, a ſpecies of phenomena; comedies and tragedies are not, for a twentieth part, ſo univerſally

verſally compoſed or tranſlated as they are in Germany; and with almanacks and anthologies, the Sicilian markets are wholly unacquainted. The want of ſuch literary reſources is therefore ſupplied by converſation upon dreſs and faſhions, the weather, or public intelligence, of whatever nature, or however ungraceful, from the lips of feminine beauty.

This was preciſely the ſtate of information when I arrived at Palermo, on my reſearches after Arabian manuſcripts. During half a year the impoſitions of *Vella* were the ſubjects of univerſal converſation. Ladies were heard to reaſon upon the authenticity of the *Martinian manuſcript*, the *Norman code*, and the *Mauritanic characters*; although they ſcarcely underſtood a ſyllable of the ſubject which they diſcuſſed: yet, from the ſcarcity of other topics, they not only attempted to inveſtigate, but to judge

judge the ſubject. Hence two parties aroſe. Some females aſſerted the innocence of *Vella*, and inſinuated that mine was the erroneous opinion. Others, on the contrary, defended my ſentiments, aſſured me that they yielded implicit credit to my belief, and that they relied upon my judgment reſpecting the conteſt. It was both my pleaſure and my pride to obtain the ſanction and applauſe of the moſt amiable and enlightened of the ſex, for the opinions of others were to me of little importance. At length, the Biſhop of Aleppo arrived from Rome. The females of the oppoſing party were anxious to hear his deciſion; and as they were obſtinately prejudiced in favour of their own diſcrimination, they concluded that the cauſe would terminate in their favour. The more diſtinguiſhed and impartial phalanx, was no leſs intereſted in the termination of the conteſt; when the Arabic

Judge

Judge put a period to the altercation, by pronouncing *Vella* an impoſtor; and by declaring, that thoſe works which had been as implicitly credited as the holy goſpel, were entirely ſpurious. Thus fell the curtain—and the comedy was finiſhed.

COUNTRY ROUND PALERMO.

THE country in the vicinity of Palermo, does not preſent an extent of plains, like the vaſt tracks of Hungary, Poland and Tartary. Excepting the views of *Catania* and *Caltagirone*, in the neighbourhood of Palermo, as well as the whole of Sicily, high mountains, and a circumſcribed horizon, compoſe the proſpect. It was therefore a ſubject of aſtoniſhment during my journey round the coaſt of Sicily, that the iſland ſhould be the granary of Italy; little elſe being ſeen, but lofty and uncultivated mountains.

On the ſummit of theſe eminences, within the view of the obſerver, every evening a ſignal is given by means of a blazing flambeau, which in a few minutes, in the manner

manner of a telegraph, extends to the limits of the whole iſland. For this purpoſe light-houſes are erected on the utmoſt altitude of the loftieſt mountains, from *Palermo* to *Meſſina*; and from thence again to the former city: by which ſpeedy information may be conveyed throughout the whole iſland, on the approach of an enemy's ſquadron during the night. *Barclaius*, in the firſt book of his intelligent *Argenis*, mentions thoſe ſignals; though not from the time of *Ceres*, as *Poliarchus*, one of the heroes of that poem, imagined; neither do they appear to originate in the period of the Spaniſh or Arabic government in Sicily. The Roman Hiſtory mentions that the *Carthaginians* had raiſed ſuch towers, near the coaſt of Spain; and as that nation were in poſſeſſion of Sicily, about that period, the cuſtom might have been coeval with the lately diſcovered *Punic catacombs*.

The

The exterior of thoſe mountains diſplays nothing but a bare extent, ſimilar to that which appears on the full moon, towards the eaſt, when obſerved through an Engliſh teleſcope. But the interior ſtrata contain all kinds of ſhells and marine productions, like thoſe of the Alps, the Pyrennees, and other mountainous parts of the globe. In theſe unperiſhable archives the hiſtory of nature, and the theory of the terreſtrial ſphere, are preſerved: they reſemble the Egyptian hieroglyphics, which, inſtead of letters and of words, preſented the objects themſelves, hewn out of ſolid ſtone; which *Deguignes*, of late, endeavoured to decypher by Chineſe characters. Here we may read the firſt chapter of *Geneſis* in a philoſophical language, declaring that the ſea roſe to the height of many hundred fathoms, and remained ſo during more than the period of *forty* days.

Beſides

Beſides theſe natural hieroglyphics, there are alſo to be found bones, of extraordinary dimenſions, ſimilar to thoſe which have been diſcovered in *Siberia*, and other places. But Sicily needs not adopt *epoques of nature*, with *Buffon*, in order to bring elephants from the burning zone, to Palermo. At the period of the *Punic* war, there exiſted elephants enough on the banks of the *Orethus*, the river of Palermo; although it is not aſcertained whether the enormous bones were thoſe of that animal; of other ſpecies of the brute creation; or of a ſingularly gigantic race of men.

In addition to theſe phyſical antiquities, *lava* and *pumice-ſtones* evince that there are alſo extinguiſhed volcanos in Sicily, which corroborate the diſcoveries of the preſent age. Two oppoſite elements, *fire* and *water*, alternately predominate in the vaſt laboratory of the globe: they are ſymbols of the two

two powers exiſting in the moral world, and combating each other. *Fire*, (emblematical of VIRTUE) contrary to all other bodies, always aſcends, illuminates, and moves; and (if we may rely on the recent experiments of Count Rumford) ſhews itſelf almoſt immaterial: for which reaſon, in *Chaldea*, and *Perſia*, at *Jeruſalem*, and at *Athens*, fire was held ſacred, as the ſymbol of divinity. Water, as the oppoſite principle, was ſuppoſed to be the abode of evil ſpirits. Thus, *ördek*, which, in the Tartarian language, ſignifies duck, or water-fowl, is the name by which the Hungarians ſignify the devil: and the Finnic tribes, throughout northern Aſia, ſtill believe, that water is the dwelling-place of Satan *.

With regard to the mountains that ſur-

* Vide *Georgi Ruſſia*, or a Deſcription of all the Nations of the Ruſſian Empire.

round

round Palermo, *Ætna* (the ſummit of which may be ſeen in clear weather from the capital) is the moſt remarkable. Though this promontory is at leaſt one hundred and fifty miles diſtant, its extraordinary altitude renders it viſible even as far as *Malta*, from which it is ſtill more removed, as the Peak of Teneriffe is to be diſcovered on the outſtretched ocean. This ſummit is preſented to the eye, the whole year, covered with ſnow; as it was in the days of *Pindar*, who in his Odes recorded this circumſtance. I aſcended to the top of this mountain, in the month of June; a month when the heat is, in Sicily, exceſſively powerful; and yet, I experienced a ſenſation of cold, which I ſhould have expected in January. Extenſive waſtes of ſnow were there congealed, as they are in *Greenland*. A ſtrong ſulphureous ſmell was borne towards me on the breeze; and the path was ſo extremely

ſteep, that we were under the neceſſity of quitting our mules, and climbing to the ſummit of the precipice. The opening of the crater is compoſed of millions of pieces of *lava*, which, like ſhattered fragments, lie one upon another. About forty fathom from the point, the ſmoke aſcended from a variety of ſmall chaſms, as from chimnies; while a hollow-ſounding craſh, from time to time, was heard, in the interior of the mountain, reſembling the ſnapping of wood in a fierce furnace; or like cannon, at a conſiderable diſtance. Death and deſolation ſeemed to hold their reign, in this grand, though terrific ſcenery; not a verdant ſpot, not a ſingle plant, diverſified the waſte of wonders; black *lava* contraſted the ſnowy ſummit, where, for more than half an hour, I was abſorbed in contemplating this majeſtic volcano: excepting when the eye relieved itſelf in tracing the luxuriant proſpect,

ſpect, which opened to my view, over the whole extent of Sicily. From the borders of *Scylla* and *Charybdis*, near the Italian coaſt, to the diſtant *Lilybæum*, oppoſite the ſhores of Barbary; and from the ſouthern promontory behind Syracuſe, to the northern extent of Palermo and Mount *Pelegrino*, the whole kingdom of Sicily may be contemplated at one view. Calabria ſeemed ſo near my feet, that I almoſt imagined I could inſtantly tread its domains: the *Lipari* iſlands were alſo at no great diſtance; while the mouth of the Adriatic; the Ionian ſea, which ſeparates Sicily from Greece; the African ocean, and the Mediterranean, were all viſible in one vaſt extent of proſpect.

POLITICAL STATE.

AS there is ſcarcely any evil which may not be productive of ſome advantage; ſo it is reſpecting the voyage of the King of Naples to Palermo. It had long been the earneſt wiſh of the Sicilians that their Sovereign ſhould, by his preſence, revive the commerce, promote the induſtry, augment the populouſneſs, by the attraction of ſtrangers to that ſpot, and alſo eſtabliſh a remedy for correcting the diſorders of public affairs. But many years elapſed, and this deſire never had been gratified: for, whether from the jealous temper of the Neapolitans, the inconvenience of a ſea voyage, or the difficulty of travelling in Calabria, the inhabitants of Sicily ſaw their Monarch ſojourn at Genoa,

Genoa, Vienna, and Frankfort, without his paying a ſingle viſit to their iſland. His father only favoured the Sicilians with his preſence at the commencement of his reign. But Ferdinand had protracted the period of his arrival, from time to time, and Palermo had not even the honour to receive the hereditary Prince within its walls, though the palace had been prepared for his reception. An unexpected event in the hiſtory of kingdoms, has ſince compelled the Sovereign to ſeek an aſylum there; and however the neceſſity of ſuch a journey may be lamented, as ſpringing from political cauſes, ſtill the preſence of the Monarch may be productive of great advantages, in remedying, or exterminating many political evils.

The country has long been infeſted with armed *banditti*, who in parties, amounting to ſome hundreds, have frequently committed the moſt daring depredations. They

are provided with fire-arms; and they have not only been known to plunder the unprotected traveller, but alſo to commit the moſt atrocious murders. During my reſidence at Palermo, the heads of ſome of theſe robbers were publicly exhibited on pikes; but the innumerable caverns which mountainous countries afford for the ſecurity and ſecretion of ſuch depredators, rendered the extermination of their phalanx almoſt impracticable.

SICILY, which once contained ſo many flouriſhing colonies, as the exquiſite Greek medals atteſt, at this period produces ſcarcely as many inhabitants, as were formerly known to people the capital: the population at preſent does not exceed 1,200,000. The heights ſurrounding Palermo, preſent a blank ſolitude of barren rocks, lofty and deſolate. No thriving village, no cultivated farm, no verdant woodland,

land, clothes or decorates the bare acclivity. As the traveller recedes from the coaſt, and traverſes the interior of the country, the unfertilized blank becomes ſtill more cheerleſs; for a conſiderable portion of the ſoil lies in a ſtate of dreary uncultivation. Conſequently, from the want of population, many articles which this ſoil would produce, were there hands to work it, are now purchaſed from foreign markets. The ſugar-cane, originally tranſplanted from this country, to *Madeira*, which was once, with the corn, the moſt valuable production of Sicily, is now ſcarcely ſufficiently cultivated to ſupply the demands of the *Duca di Monteleone*, on whoſe eſtates, at *Avola*, there is only a ſmall ſtock to be found, ſcarcely ſufficient for a few bottles of rum. The palm-tree, ſo delightful to contemplate, which in the reign of Frederick the Second produced conſiderable quantities of exquiſite dates,

has, excepting a few flouriſhing trees which ſurvive the deſolation, entirely diſappeared. The camels which in the thirteenth century formed a conſiderable article of trade with Sicily, and which were proved to be of the greateſt utility in a country ſo deficient in highways, are alſo ſunk into decay: the interior commerce is therefore ill-ſtated. Continual complaints are made of the badneſs of roads; a ſmall track was ſomewhat amended near Palermo; but the larger part of the iſland is, as it was ſuppoſed to have been in the time of the *Cyclops* and *Leſtrigons*; and it was with infinite regret we experienced the greateſt inconvenience, even at this period, of travelling through the country.

The exterior of the iſland of Sicily is ſimilar to the interior. In the year 1796, its ſtate was ſo perfectly defenceleſs, that at Palermo the inhabitants trembled at the

ſquadron

ſquadron of *Toulon*; for had it proceeded to Sicily, the whole iſland muſt have ſurrendered without a ſingle ſhot. The temperate winter of this climate is ſcarcely paſſed, when African pirates from *Tunis*, *Gezair*, and other parts of Barbary, which is at no great diſtance, annoy and interrupt the ſmall portion of commerce ſtill circulating in Sicily; they poſſeſs themſelves of the moſt valuable prizes, owing to the want of an armed defence, even before the eyes of their owners: and frequently not content with plunder, they abſolutely conſign the moſt reſpectable individuals to ſlavery. This act of oppreſſion was put in practice only laſt year, in the perſon of the Prince *Paternò*, while he was proceeding from Palermo to Naples. This traveller was forcibly ſent to *Tunis*, where, inſtead of the eaſy life to which he had been accuſtomed; inſtead of the ſociety of the young and lovely part of the

the creation, he was, during the period of ſix months, condemned to behold the ape-like viſages of *Sahara* and *Biled-ul-gerid*, in the land of *lions* and of *tigers*; until a *Capidgi Baſhi* arrived from Conſtantinople, with a firman of the Grand Seignior, for his releaſe. But the *Bey* was not intimidated by the imperial ſeal, and the Prince was at laſt obliged to purchaſe his liberty, by the payment of nine hundred thouſand florins.

The ſmall iſlands of Sicily ſuffer conſiderable inconveniencies, from ſimilar cauſes; particularly *Pantelleria*, *Uſtica*, and *Lampeduſa*. The laſt of theſe, which might be productive to its owner, (a Prince of the Houſe of *Tommaſi*) of a very ſplendid revenue, is, for the want of proper defence, entirely deſerted. Only one ſolitary hermit is there to be found, who at the approach of a Chriſtian veſſel, illumines a little glimmering lamp before the image of the Virgin;

gin; but when an African ſhip appears in view, he lights his feeble flame to greet the Muſſulmen: it is therefore become a ſaying at Palermo, when a man is alternately influenced by two parties, that he is "*the Hermit of Lampeduſa.*"

The number of Monks and Friars, in Sicily, is extremely prejudicial to the kingdom; this grievance is augmented by the ſequeſtration of the nuns; and by the celibacy of theſe perſons the ſtate is deprived of the fineſt race of youth. Bound in bonds as unnatural as they muſt be wretched, they linger through a life of ſolitary muſing; their aſylums the nurſeries of diſcontent; and the perſecuting ſpirit of penance, the ſource of eternal inquietude. Thus they exhibit a ſtriking contraſt to thoſe voluntary penitents, the *Fakeers* of India; while the manufactories, and the uſeful branches of trade, are ſinking into decay. The wages

of

of mechanic labour are, for this reaſon, alſo extremely high. The manufactures of the country admit of no compariſon with thoſe of other nations; while a ſoil, ſo bleſſed by nature, is hourly withering for want of cultivation, and its inhabitants compelled to derive every neceſſary article of comfort and convenience, from the proſperity and the toil of foreign kingdoms.

Another diſadvantage has ariſen, from the extraordinary number of law-ſtudents and practitioners. A military profeſſion preſenting no hope of preferment, in a country to which war was an alien during ſixty years, the youth, of the middling claſſes of the people, beheld only the alternative of becoming either lawyers or eccleſiaſtics; and the latter choice predominated, becauſe the ſituation was moſt calculated to become important to the ſtate. The number of law-ſuits conſequently augmented conſiderably,

ſiderably, and ſome of the moſt opulent houſes ſunk into decay by their encreaſing litigations. Scarcely a family, reſident at Palermo, eſcaped the contagion, and many individuals were involved in five and ſix law-ſuits at a time. Thus, the attornies and pleaders were daily enriched; and it is a ſingular circumſtance, that there are, at this epocha, ſome legal proceſſes, ſtill undecided, which were abſolutely commenced in the preceding century.

Finally, the military, which according to the preſent political ſyſtem of Europe, ſhould occupy the firſt rank, has been entirely neglected. Few perſons, excepting thoſe who are in diſtreſſed circumſtances, or who have been ſtigmatized with impropriety, are here enrolled. The nobility avoided entering into a ſituation, ſo degraded by the admiſſion of improper perſons,

and

and which during a peace was rendered wholly inactive; and yet, at this period, ſuch an eſtabliſhment is abſolutely neceſſary, for the preſervation of the ſtate. *Franceſco Sforza*, (ſays *Macchiavelli*) being of a ſpirit warlike and brave, roſe from the rank of a private ſoldier, to that of Duke of Milan. His ſons, on the contrary, wholly diveſted of that martial inſpiration, which actuated their parent's mind, and abhorring the uſe of arms, deſcended from the high rank which had been preſented to them, and became private characters. *Roger*, the founder of the Sicilian monarchy, being of a martial nature, with a ſmall portion of Normans, drove the Saracens from Sicily: he afterwards perſecuted them in Africa, where he took from them their cities and iſlands; and at laſt rendered the *Bey* of *Tunis* tributary: we, on the contrary,

trary, have beheld an army without diſcipline, though four times exceeding their numbers, defeated;—and with an inferior body of French troops, obliging their Sovereign to ſeek an aſylum among his ſubjects —AT PALERMO!

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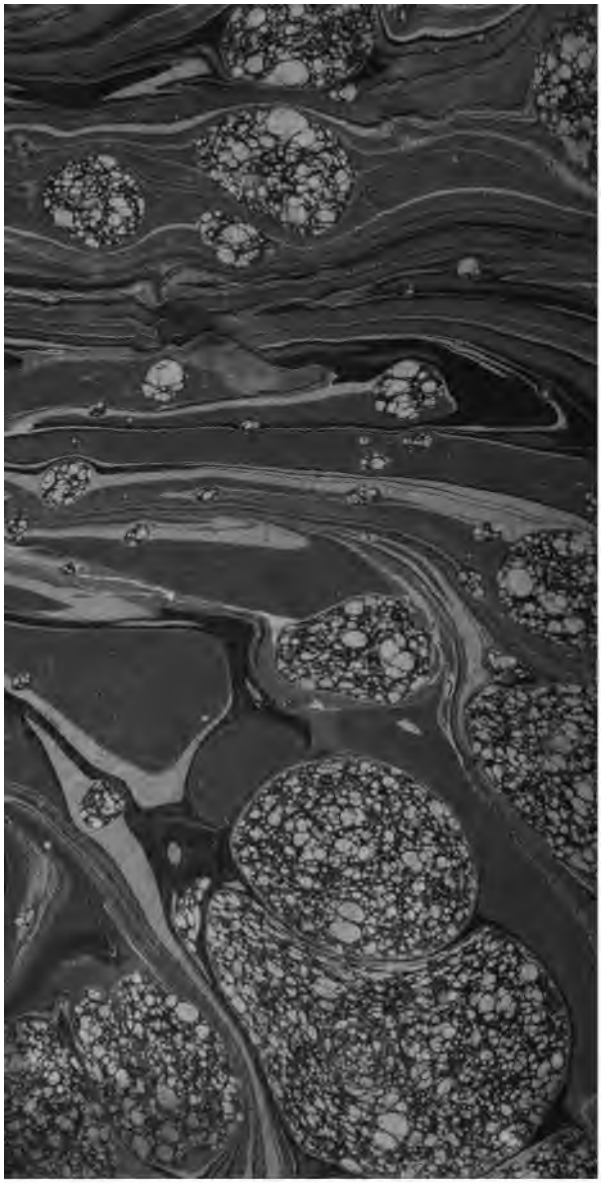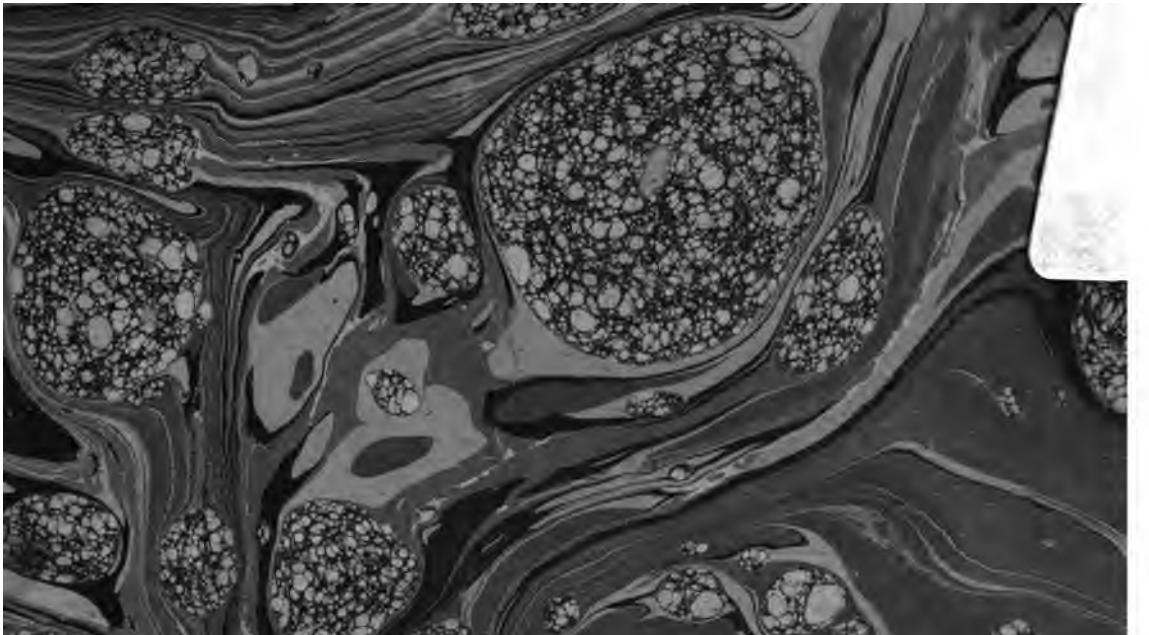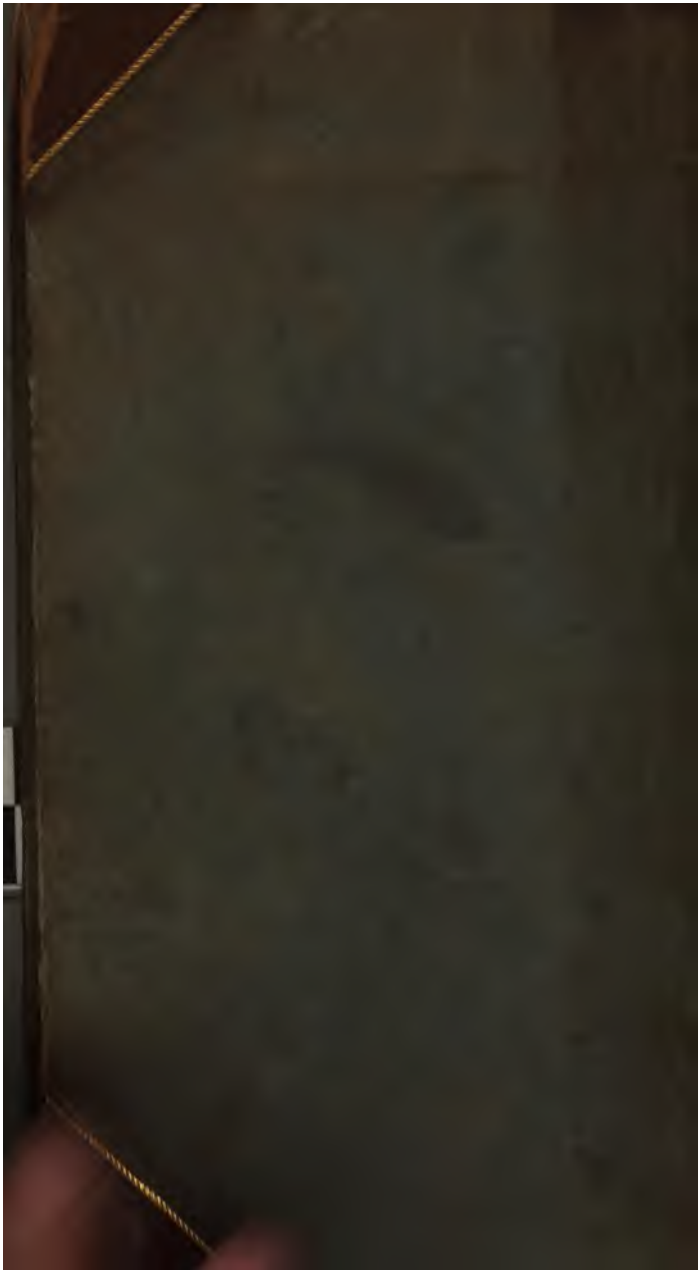
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